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EDITORIAL

By Dan "Shoe" Hsu • shoe@ziffdavis.com

Cover Happy

(or, "How many times can I use the word 'cover' in one paragraph?")

Last month, our cover story was on Final Fantasy X, one of the most anticipated PlayStation 2 games of next year, and our cover art was drawn by famed FF artist, Yoshitaka Amano (for a few limited editions, anyway). This month, our cover story covers (sorry, left my thesaurus at home) one of the most anticipated PS2 titles of *this* year, Metal Gear Solid 2. To help celebrate that, MGS artist and character designer Yoji Shinkawa graced the cover with a piece he designed just for us (well, for *you*, really). That means the book you are holding in your hands is another collector's edition, with MGS2 art you won't find anywhere else. So please don't hand this issue to your greasy-pawed little brother when you're through with it.

That's not even the best part. Hideo Kojima, the man who's reaching superstar status in our industry along the likes of Shigeru Miyamoto (father of Mario) and Yuji Naka (Sonic's papa), granted us a world-exclusive interview, even though he's "underground" and not speaking to any press. Hey, we must be doing something right if Metal Gear's creator and director is willing to give us an update on his now-secretive game when he's turned down *Newsweek*, other gaming mags and sites, and...well, everyone else in the world so far. Read all about the man, his private life, "the game," and more, starting on page 118.

So what are we doing right, exactly? It's no secret, really. We report on games and the gaming industry with absolutely no fluff, no bias and certainly no BS. A lot of Net folks with nothing better to do than to bitch and whine all day long just love going on message boards and claiming that our reviews are catered toward our advertisers. OK, whatever.

Electronic Gaming Monthly has a proud tradition of staying editorially independent of any and all things having to do with ads. I remember a long time ago, Acclaim pulled spots from the mag because they were p-o'ed at my review (5.5 out of 10) of Turok for the Nintendo 64. You know what? Our publisher and sales team never said a single word to me about it. No pressure to apologize, change my score, or give favorable coverage later. I only found out about this loss of ads a couple of years later, by accident. Other major advertisers have pulled ads from us for this reason or that (one company because we didn't like their rehashing of certain zombie games, another because we mocked a certain toy soldier franchise). It don't bother us none! They can leave, they can come back...we will continue to be honest and straightforward with our readers, even if it means losing all of our advertisers in the process and going out of business. For *EGM*, integrity is paramount.

"...please don't hand this issue to your greasy-pawed little brother when you're through with it."

Speaking of being up front with you, in this issue, we're covering some games with which most parents won't want their kids to be involved (Silent Hill 2—page 74, Grand Theft Auto III—page 70). We support and encourage parents' rights to monitor the media their kids are exposed to, so I'm giving you that warning now, before you reach those pages.

Shoe

Contributing Writers

Chris Baker

This month, Chris contributes another head-scratcher for our award-winning series, *Ever Wondered*. Got any more questions for us? Just ask!

Kevin Gifford

Kevin, who penned this month's wireless gaming feature, works on translations for Japanese games and runs the news site www.video-senki.com.

Eat My Shorts!

Look around this issue for quotes from The Simpsons or a famous movie. Find one, e-mail it to us at EGM@ziffdavis.com (subject: Eat My Shorts—October Issue), and you may be one of five lucky winners (chosen at random) who will win a copy of this month's Review Crew Game of the Month.

Some quotes/references from Sept. issue:
- "...is a perfectly cromulent word." (*Simpsons*, pg. 22)
- "...hiding in his 'Hidden Fortress'..." (*Hidden Fortress*, pg. 140)
- "If you miss this, you better be dead or in jail." (*Simpsons*, pg. 156)

Winners from the August issue:
- Lon Diamond—Encinitas, CA
- Steve Karig—Bridgewater, NJ
- Donnie VandenBos—Great Falls, MT
- Jose Acero—Goodyear, AZ
- Artie Vierkant—Boise, ID

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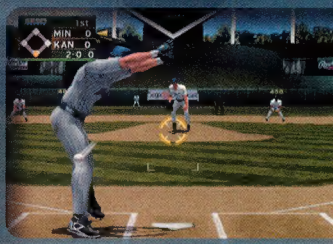

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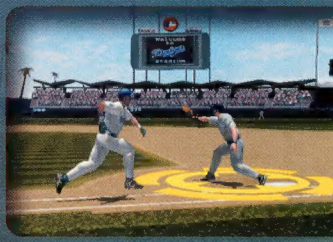

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Features

Metal Gear Solid 2 When Konami announced that Metal Gear Solid creator Hideo Kojima was "submerging" and thus refusing to grant interviews, there was only one thing we could do: infiltrate Konami HQ in Japan for the full scoop. After we got stuck in his office air ducts for the sixth time, Kojima admired our persistence and granted us this exclusive look at his PS2 masterpiece. **Page 118**

Soul Calibur Slashes Back At long last, Namco's landmark fighting game is back! Order up your arcade fighting sticks and tighten up your gi to prepare for *EGM*'s tantalizing world-exclusive first-look at this amazing sequel. **Page 34**.

Will Grand Theft Auto III Kick You In The Ass? The game that politicians love to hate is back. This ambitious and gratuitously gory gangster simulator is Senator Lieberman's worst nightmare come true. Check out the ol' ultra-violence on **page 70**.

Heartless and Soul With not one but two vampire sequels in the works from Eidos and Crystal Dynamics, who can tell these blood brothers apart? We expose the jugular on Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2 and Soul Reaver 2. The bloodletting begins on **page 140.**

Wireless Gaming In Japan and Europe, gamers are already playing on-the-go versions of Resident Evil and Dance Dance Revolution on their cell phones, but when will we get to dial up these games in the good ol' USA? Please hold while *EGM* investigates. **Page 132**

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This month we take Tony Hawk for a grind on the PS, PS2 and Xbox. For those of you who crave a little more blood than action-sports provide, check out Silent Hill 2 or GTA3. If you simply want to beat your enemies into submission, Capcom vs. SNK Pro on the Dreamcast is where it's at.

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Gamers have some tough decisions to make. Should you buy Madden or GameDay? Is Time Crisis 2 or Silent Scope 2 the best shooter? Is online play enough to save World Series 2K2? And the toughest of all—is Pokémon Crystal worth buying? We have answers.

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The Crew ponders how they're going to find the cash to buy all the new systems and games coming this fall.

SYSTEM KEY

- PlayStation 2
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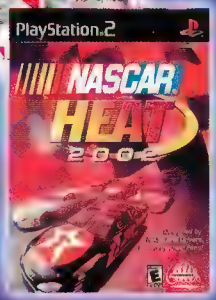

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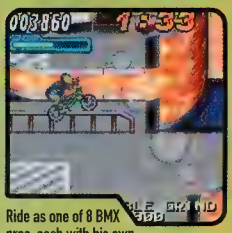

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Letters to the Editors

LETTER FACTS

- Readers finding more *Simpsons* quotes than we remember writing: 17
- Checks for $312: 1
- Number of letters written from self-demeaning e-mail addresses: 26

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Impulse Gaming

Since the October release of the PlayStation 2, I have whined and complained to my parents about getting one. Every time I asked, they'd say the same thing, "Save your money." But I knew I'd be an old woman by the time I got one, or the PS2 would be obsolete by the time I got enough money. I am 13 years old;

With all the heated words and competitive attitudes coming out of anticipation for the Xbox and the GameCube in November, it's good to see that someone's content to live in the now. We're glad your story had a happy ending, Stacie. While we don't condone counting on parental impulse buys to get you through those tough situations in life, it's

"The man who said he didn't want a PS2 was suddenly ready to buy one!"

Congratulations on writing the letter of the month, Stacie. You win an InterAct GameShark for PlayStation 2, PlayStation, Dreamcast, Nintendo 64 or Game Boy Color.

I'm not old enough to work, there are no kids in my neighborhood to babysit, and I don't get an allowance. I wanted a PS2 so badly, I actually wrote a persuasive essay to my parents on the benefits of owning a PS2.

But the weirdest thing happened last week. My friend was over with his PS2 and we were playing NBA Street. My dad walked into the living room, sat down, and watched us play for two hours until I finally asked him if he wanted to try it. My dad said yes and boy, did he play. We had to practically rip his hands off the controller when my friend had to leave. "Stacie," he asked me after my friend left, "is that game for the PlayStation 2?" I replied, "Yes." The he says, "OK, get your coat on. Where's that Electronics Boutique?" I stared at my father in shock—the man who said he didn't want a PS2 was suddenly ready to buy one! We went to EB and sure enough, my dad bought a PS2, along with NBA Street. He also bought some games for me and let me pre-order Metal Gear Solid 2. I am still in shock up to this day. And though it is hard to get my dad off it sometimes, I am truly happy that I have a PS2 (and will be able to get Final Fantasy X!).

Stacie
MommyTJr@aol.com

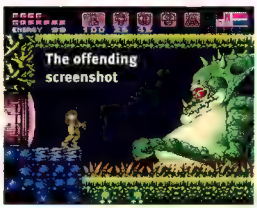
cool to see that your dad appreciates your pastime and can get as into it as you (he does know that MGS2 is a Mature-rated game, right?). Man, if you can breeze that kind of stuff by him after a few games of basketball, we'd say you've found his Achilles Heel. Well, at least we know which system you want your GameShark prize for...

Cheatless Proof

I luv you *EGM*! You put Super Metroid over Zelda in your Super Nintendo feature! It's about friggin' time that game got some props! However, that is beside the point. In your picture, you were confronting the boss of Brinstar. Unless you used a Game Genie, there is no way you could have those items before defeating that boss. I thought you guys never cheated (insert *X-Files* theme here).

Timegg195@aol.com

An eagle eye you have, son (11 energy blocks and a grappling hook at Kraid?!). We were wondering which Metroid aficionado would pick up on that first. When we grabbed the shot, the utility bar came out all messed up for some reason, so we had to paste one in from elsewhere to make it all purty-like. Guess we got a little ahead of ourselves—nice catch. FYI—We never have and never will use cheats to get anywhere in a game, period. It's more fun that way.

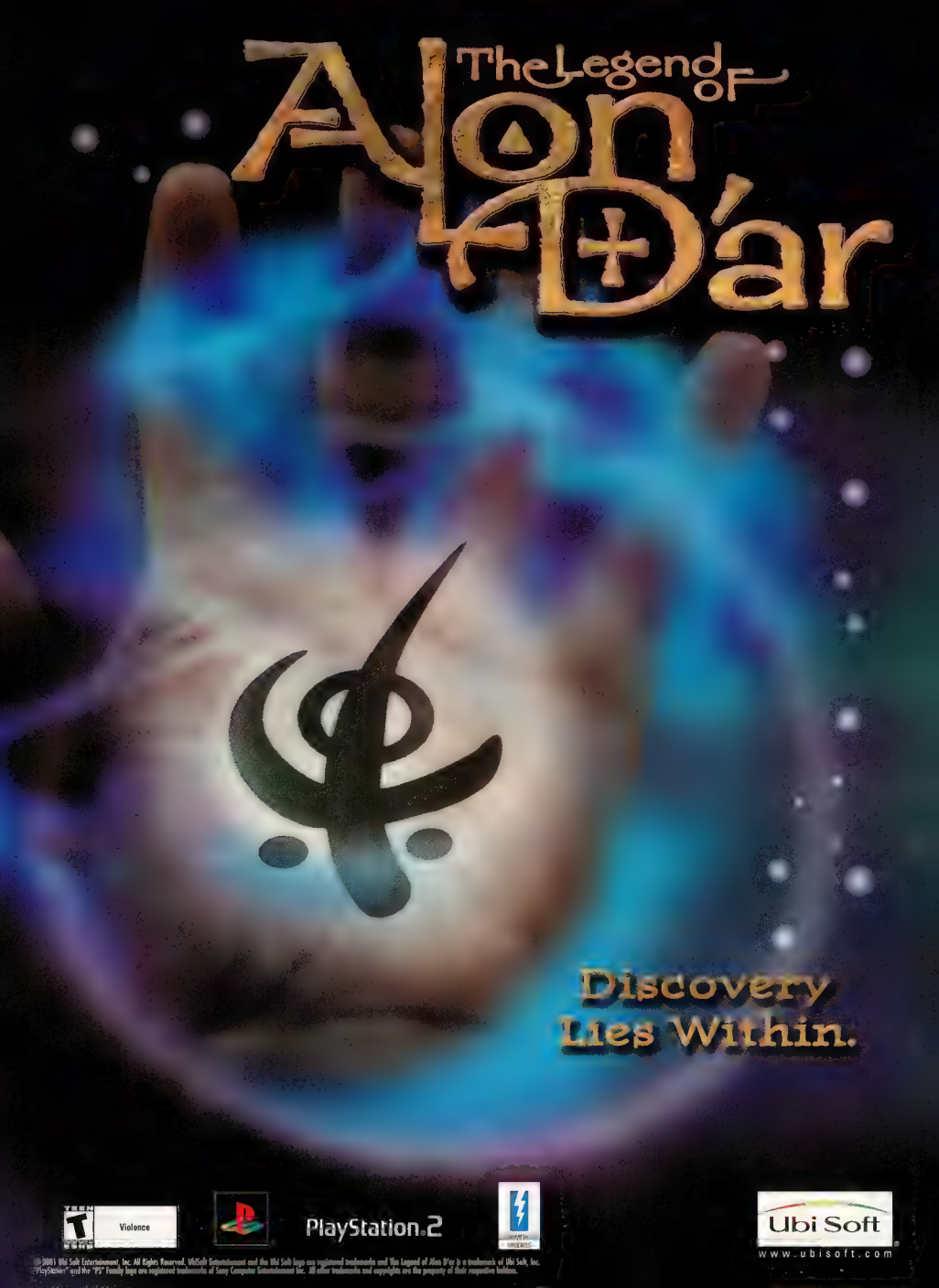


Pretty With Pink

I love your mag and read your article on the Game Boy Advance in issue 144. I like the part where you explain what color of GBA is right for you, especially where you say, "Something else for the ladies—or really self-assured guys: a fuchsia (pink) GBA." I just recently purchased a GBA, and it was fuchsia, because it was the only color the store had left. But then again, I really didn't care what color my GBA was, as long as I got one.

Do any of the guys there at the headquarters own a fuchsia GBA?

Duncan Crawford
skulboy@earthlink.net



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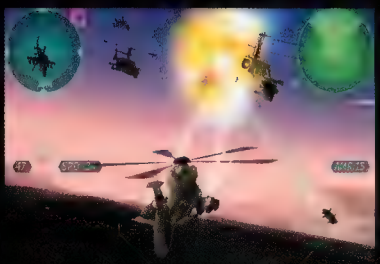
PlayStation.2



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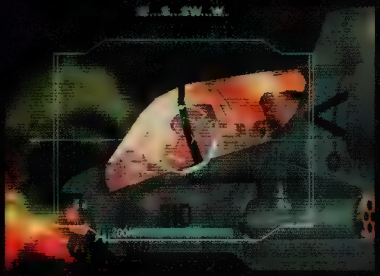

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E-mail us your thoughts, your wishes, your gripes, your innermost weirdness…or your pictures, crazy screenshots or photos of bizarre game-related moments. By the way, "daring" us to print your letter is the quickest way to get it thrown in the trash.

We have it on good authority that local editor Jonathan Dudlak purchased one fuchsia GBA for a lady friend who allegedly lives "out of state" (uh-huh). He's been prancing around the office lately asking the other editors if different shirts "make him look fat," so we're starting to wonder...

Positively Revolting

I was sitting in my room, when my mom comes up the stairs and says, "I think it's time to clean!" I'm like, "Noooooo!" So I thought maybe I can start a revolution. It's time to realize the conditions in my room will not improve. It's time to stand up and clean! Wait for my signal, then strike hard and strike fast. If you join, you have a chance of being part of the revolution! If you survive, you will go down in history forever!

Bryan Danilchuk
Stoneham, MA

Looks like someone's been playing a bit too much Red Faction. Though we applaud your revolutionary spirit, we can't help but wonder if *not* cleaning wouldn't be the way to go, since maintaining a spotless pad is the oppressive mandate of your motherly dictatorship. Besides, you're bound to get more volunteers if there's no actual work involved. Oh, and if mom finds maggots inhabiting your messy but morally justified room, you didn't get the idea from us. Viva la resistance!

Having Issues

I already know God loves me, but you must love me too. On Thursday I opened up my mailbox to see if the latest issue of *EGM* had arrived yet. When I took a gander at the cover, what did I see? The limited-edition cover featuring artwork by Yoshitaka Amano! Oh man! I must be the luckiest guy in the world. My friend got the normal cover, which still looks cool.

Reggie
WRITINGGUY@aol.com

Truly the gods have smiled upon you, Reginald. See, everyone? Subscribers did indeed get the Amano cover (Reg, your big bag of money is on the way; thanks for covering us). We wish it could have been everyone, but if you're clear on the concept of "limited edition," you'll understand why it wasn't.

Divine Intervention

I received the September 2001 issue of *EGM* today and was looking forward to reading it. As I was thumbing through it, I came upon a response to a letter on page 26. Apparently, the writer must have thought referring to a Game Boy that is sitting in the toilet as Jesus was cute and funny. However, to a loyal *EGM* reader who holds Jesus Christ in the highest possible regard, this is not funny and is very offensive.

I would like to know what Ziff Davis will do to make sure this will not appear in magazines again. Again, I have been a happy patron of *EGM* and its sponsors for years now. It appears this sort of garbage could ruin what has been a great magazine. Maybe the time has come that Ziff Davis does not care about the segment of its readers that fall into the "religious" or "Christian" category. Has it?

Drew Baxter
Daphne, AL

Well, Drew, our intention certainly wasn't to jest about anyone's religious beliefs. In fact, we didn't even think about it being in the toilet when we made the resurrection reference. The whole thing was just an attempt to find an element of youth culture that everyone could relate to. But even we slip up sometimes (especially during crazy deadlines!). Please accept our apology; we hope this hasn't

SHORTS

Summer's over, so we're clearing out lots of shorts this issue.

I was wondering why those Got Milk commercials aren't in 3D? It would be cool if they made a Zelda one.

Sk8board Masta

That's *exactly* what we've been saying all along!! Actually, they did make one with Mario. It was pretty cool for a milk ad, we guess.

I object to the excessive use of the word "niggling" in your Review section.

Aeneman@aol.com

What do you mean excessive? We only used it once. Relax, it just means "petty."

Why don't companies make stuff right out of games, like Sonic's shoes or Mario's hat? I'm sure they would sell

Rodolfo Lopez
Memphis, TN

If they sold Sonic's shoes, he wouldn't be able to run anymore. Is that what you want? Is it?

My mom is tougher than any game girl you have!

Haylee Benn
Age 10

When Jeanne Kim saw this, her eyes went ablaze with girl-gamer rage. Please, for our sake, don't antagonize her!

Question of the Moment

What Is Your Favorite Final Fantasy, and Are You Excited For FFX?

Of course I'm excited about Final Fantasy X; it's one-third of the way to Final Fantasy XXX.

JustReg@hotmail.com

No, I'm not excited about FFX. I played FFVII and it freaked me out. I had to start seeing a therapist because of it!

jpeninger@msn.com

My favorite Final Fantasy is FFIX because it tells the story better than any of the previous FFs. I always like each FF better than the last, so you bet I'm looking forward to FFX.

Justin6121@aol.com

I fondly remember destroying Chaos when I was only six, and the series has only gone uphill from there for me. Final Fantasy VIII, however, was the climax, and IX was just the cigarette after.

matt@rgsd.org

FFIII was definitely the best. And X, er...I about lost interest when Square started pulling their lead characters from the boy-band reject pool.

matt_e@saber.net

Final Fantasy VII. Cloud was my idol; I would copy every one of his animations and basically just try to be like him.

CHU5344@aol.com

My favorite Final Fantasy is Tactics. What can I say, I'm a sucker for customization. With that in mind, I'm not even thinking about FFX. Now FFXI is another story...

gregoryjranson@email.msn.com

Final Fantasy III is hands down the best FF game. Any game that makes you sing opera has got to be good.

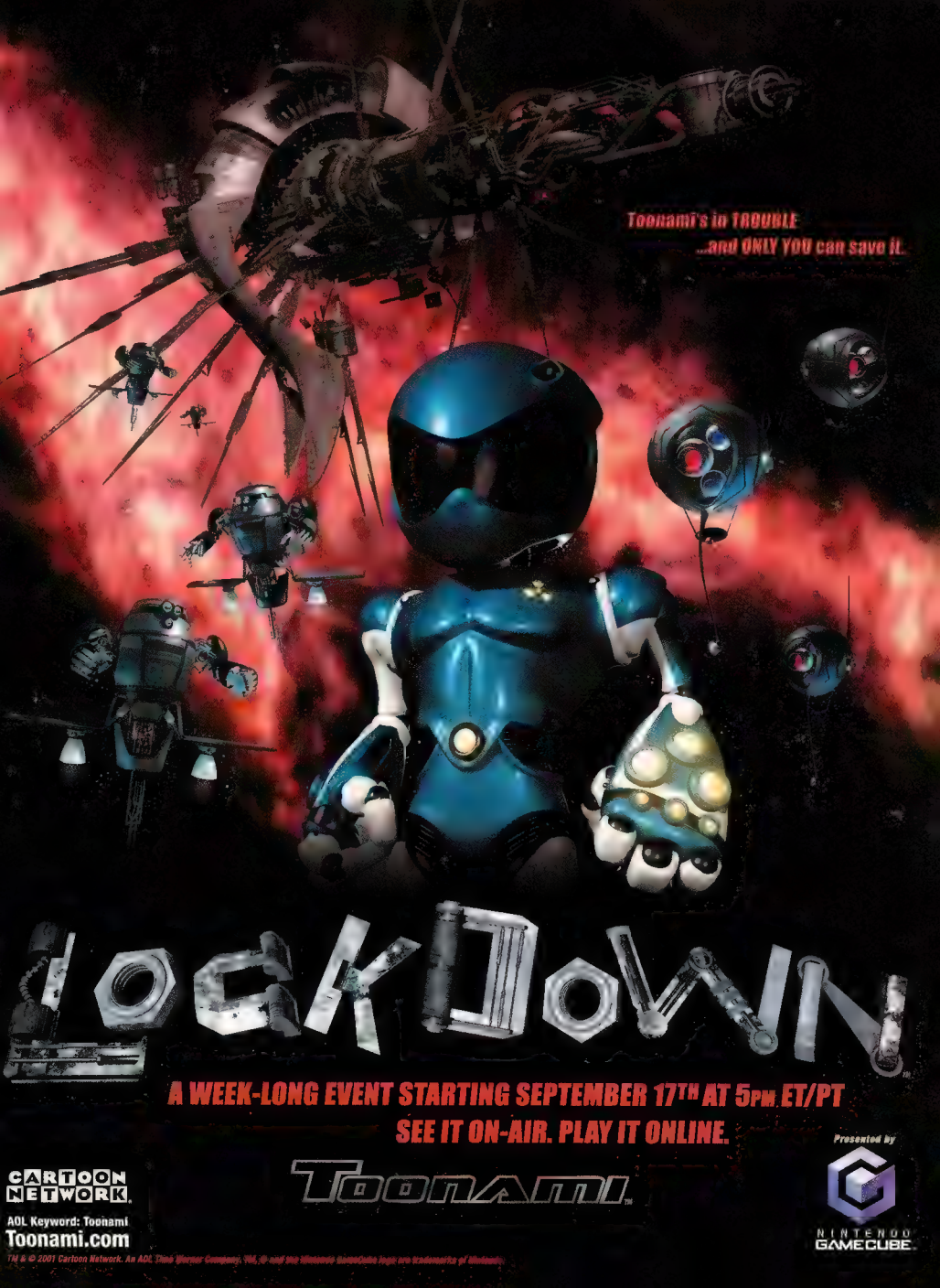
pmstroud2@hotmail.com

Next Month's Question of the Moment:

Do you feel like you are or will be missing out on a lot of good games this year because of Mature ESRB ratings?

Send your short but sweet responses to: EGM@ziffdavis.com with the subject heading:

Overrated



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Get into The Game

(M) Mature Audience

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You can write EGM at:

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Oak Brook, IL
60522-3338
e-mail: EGM@ziffdavis.com

Please note: We reserve the right to edit any correspondence for space purposes. If you don't want your name, city/state or e-mail address printed, tell us so (but please include your phone number, mailing address and system preference for Letter of the Month prize consideration).

Also note: Although we can't respond to every letter, as far as you know, we do read them all. Also, everything you send us is ours to keep!

lessened your opinion of the mag—we'll be more careful in the future.

Two-Cent Refund

I have a Dreamcast and I buy games often. Sometimes when I buy a game, the retailer says something like, "You wasted your money" or "You shouldn't have gotten a Dreamcast." I think this is because Sega is not making more systems, but that doesn't mean that Dreamcast isn't a good system.

Chris Brimer
Florien, LA

Chris, it's time you learned that the world is full of ignorant people. You go on buying whatever the heck you feel like buying, even if it's Atari Jaguar games. Well, OK, not Jaguar games, but Dreamcast is definitely in the clear. And if anyone tells you differently, you let them know that your friends here are gonna run compromising photos of 'em in *EGM*.

You Win!

I just got your September 2001 mag, and on page 16 on the left it says, "Congratulations. You win an InterAct GameShark." What do I do?

Nobrain439@aol.com

What you do, Nobrain, is go back into the mag, look above that text where it says, "Letter of the Month," and realize that we were talking to the guy who sent in the letter. Don't sweat it, pal, you weren't the only one to think he had won something for nothing. Kids these days...

Reader Fails to Read

Since subscribing to your magazine, I realized this mag is all about Game Boys, Sega, etc. Do you ever review or discuss the dependable PC?

jjob@mediaone.net

Way to subscribe before knowing anything about the mag. We'd cover PC stuff, but all of our dependable machines have General Protection Faults and Errors Type 11.

Dops

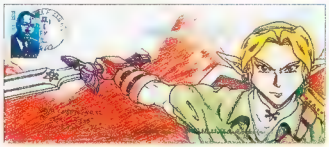
We could have sworn we heard SSX characters cursing in the game, and referenced the presumed foul mouths in issue #145's Letters. Turns out the profanity was just Shoe losing at Street Fighter; our apologies for leading you all astray.

In our review of ESPN X Games for PS2, we said that there was no multiplayer split-screen mode available. Turns out there is—it's a bit buried under the "others" menu, but it's in there after all. Our apologies to you and Konami for the oversight.

LETTER ART

Letter Art of the Month WINNER

Chris Kau • Canadensis, PA



Congratulations, Chris Kau! Your prize is on the way—an InterAct GameShark for PlayStation 2, PlayStation, Dreamcast, Nintendo 64 or Game Boy Color.

GAMESHARK

Close, but no controller

Bad luck to this guy.... Better luck next time.

Sol Henderson
Eastsound, WA

Put your creative skills to the test by decking out a #10 envelope (the long, business type) with your own unique touch. Send your letter art to:

EGM Letter Art, P.O. Box 3338, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338
(or e-mail EGM@ziffdavis.com)

Be sure to include a mailing address, and tell us what system you'd like your prize for, in case you win. All entries become the property of Ziff Davis Media Inc. and will not be returned!

For "Letter of the Month and "Letter Art of the Month" contests, no purchase is necessary. If you're really bored and want to read the complete contest legal rules, please visit www.egmmag.com or write us at: EGM Contests-Legal Rules Request P.O. Box 3338 Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338. After reading the rules, please get a life. Don't forget to tell us what system you'd like your prize for and don't forget to give us your physical mailing address as well...or else, no prize for you!

getintothegame.com

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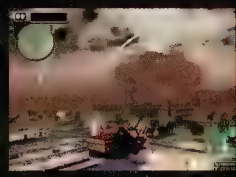
PlayStation 2

twisted metal:



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By Chris Johnston chris_johnston@ziffdavis.com
& Jonathan Dudlak jonathan_dudlak@ziffdavis.com

WORLD EXCLUSIVE: SOUL CALIBUR 2

From the arcade version.
©Namco Limited. These screen shots are in-progress.

It's not a huge secret that Namco is working on an arcade sequel to their critically acclaimed Dreamcast/coin-op hit, Soul Calibur, a title many consider to be the best fighting game ever. (The DC version is the only fighter in history to score straight 10's from *EGM*'s Review Crew.) We recently "acquired" some inside info, a handful of screens and a confidential video tape that revealed Soul Calibur 2 is in the works for Nintendo's upcoming console as well. Namco will release Soul Calibur 2 for the GameCube sometime in the spring of 2002 in Japan. No word yet on when the arcade or U.S. editions are due, or if Namco is making this game for any other consoles besides the GameCube.

The three hi-resolution shots you see on these pages are from the arcade version of SC2 (and are labeled as such). The rest of the images in this story were taken off a VHS tape, which showed **actual Soul Calibur 2 gameplay running on GameCube hardware**. Note, because we took the GameCube screens from a video tape and not the machine itself, those pictures are rather blah in quality. Also, it's obvious that a lot of stuff you see here is placeholder junk (like the Mario Paint-quality energy bars and win-count circles). You can expect the GameCube version of Soul Calibur 2 to look practically the same as its arcade counterpart. Everything will get several face lifts and tummy tucks before the game gets released.

Another note: Scan these pictures to put up online and we'll kill you. Then we'll force you to have a nice "sit down" with our lawyers.

So with those pleasantries out of the way, let's get on with talking about Soul Calibur 2.

EGM'S TOP FIGHTING GAMES OF ALL TIME

(According to a long and painful staff "discussion" about which games we'd take to a desert island with us—assuming we had a TV and game systems and electricity, that is.)

1. Soul Calibur (DC)
2. Street Fighter III: Third Strike (DC)
3. Street Fighter Alpha 3 (DC, PS)
4. Virtua Fighter 2 (Saturn)
5. Tekken Tag Tournament (PS2)

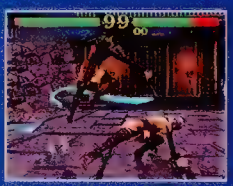
(Honorable mentions: Samurai Shodown II and any old-school Street Fighter II)

Soul Calibur (Dreamcast)

HITS GAMECUBE

Footage is arcade version (C) Namco Limited. These screenshots are in-progress

"Tongfar" (on the left) is the only new character on the tape in actual combat. Here she is, about to night stick it to Ivy.



WHAT WE KNOW (AND DON'T)

We know very little so far. Except for a few tidbits sniffed out by our newshound, Quartermann, we don't know anything outside of what secrets this video tape whispered to us. We want to be honest and not make any crap up, however, so we're giving you a list of knows and don't knows.

Fighting Engine

What we know: SC1's famed 8-Way Run is back. This allows full 3D freedom of movement, unlike the side-stepping Virtua Fighter or Tekken games, which are still essentially played like any ol' 2D fighter. Also, SC2 has something called "Avoid!!" and "Break!!" These are probably temporary terms, but the word "Avoid!!" pops up when the defender makes a quick side-step and narrowly misses an incoming attack.
What we don't know: What "Break!!" is. It doesn't appear to be the same weapon-breaking feature in Soul Calibur 1's predecessor, Soul Blade (where weapons can be destroyed when used to block or "turtle" too much), though it does happen when weapons clash.

A quick sidestep of the Sword Buster attack gives Taki (in the red outfit) the "Avoid!!" message and a chance to give Siggy some payback.

"Break!!" seems to happen when weapons get locked then broken apart, but that's just us taking a stab at this new fighting system.

SOUL CALIBUR 2 CONTINUED

See the steps and the different elevations?

Stages

What we know: Several things, the most important one being the arenas now have walls in them. With SC2, you can avoid being cheaped out of victory via a nasty ring-out. We didn't see an entirely enclosed stage yet, so the game still has room for characters like Astaroth to use their superior ring-out skills to force an early victory. The levels now have different elevations (like in Virtua Fighter 3), and uneven and more realistically textured floors (like in PS2's Tekken Tag). Also, the arenas are much bigger than the small "islands" in Soul Calibur 1.

What we don't know: How the walls work. In the video, we didn't see one character get knocked through the barriers. Do they break away? Do the warriors get bounced off of them? We're not sure yet.

This spacious library is one of the many new stages. It's clearly bigger than the previous games' arenas. Check out the wall of books behind "Tongfar." Time books?" Har har.

Graphics

What we know: We saw a lot more showy sparks and flames when the weapons clanged together. The combatants on the character select screen are now animated, and the fighters are a lot more detailed; you'll see more realistic shadows, muscles and hair. Also, Ivy (below, left) really likes to flaunt her stuff now.

What we don't know: How else this game improves visually over the amazing Dreamcast version. It's hard to tell from the grainy video.

When you see Siegfried's blond locks flowing like Fabio's mane on a windy day, you'll thank the lord for GameCube technology.

Sound

What we know: Namco's brought the sound quality up a notch. The clanks and bangs of the weapons are more distinct now, and you can hear different effects when the players are tromping around on various surfaces. (You can tell when a warrior walks off of the cobblestones and onto sand, for example.)

What we don't know: Rumored by our sources in Japan but definitely unconfirmed, the U.S. version may have English voiceovers, so maybe we'll get to finally understand what the Soul Calibur fighters are saying.

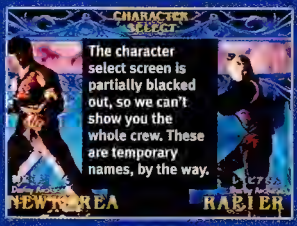
Characters

What we know: Inside sources from Japan tell us that Namco is planning on having around 16-20 characters for the home version of SC2. That's around the same number of fighters SC1 has (19). Soul Cal 2 has at least five new duelists, including:

- Two Koreans (one looks a lot like Hwang from the first game).
- A French guy (who—surprise, surprise—wields a rapier).
- A Pacific Islander (a girl who uses tonfas, a.k.a. Asian nightsticks).

Other things we witnessed but suspect are placeholder names: Tongfar (the temporary name for the Pacific Islander girl), Cassandra (looks just like Sophitia from Soul Calibur 1) and Wovama (a young blond female). Also, the following characters are confirmed to be making a return to this sequel: Mitsurugi, Taki, Ivy, Siegfried, Nightmare, Astaroth, Xianghua, Cervantes, Voldo, Kilik and Yoshimitsu.

What we don't know: Who else from the original games are returning for this sequel.


CHARACTER SELECT
The character select screen is partially blacked out, so we can't show you the whole crew. These are temporary names, by the way.
NEWKOREA
RABIER

Anything Else?

Nope. That's it...everything we know about Soul Calibur 2. Naturally, we'll show you more hi-resolution screenshots when we get our hands on some. The GameCube version is scheduled to be shown at Nintendo's Japanese trade show, Space World, so we should be back with an update next issue.

-Dan "Shoe" Hsu

RICKY CARMICHAEL
ONE 250cc SUPERCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP DOWN, ONE (TWO, THREE, FOUR...) TO GO.
CARL LYNDMAN PHOTOS
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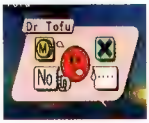
TO FIND A LOCATION NEAR YOU, SEE THE LATEST NEWS, TOUR ANIMATION AND MORE, VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT
WWW.DCSHOECOUSA.COM

20 per minute The number of Game Boy Advance units continuously being sold since the June 11 launch. Also the average number of times the GBA gets cursed at due to sucky lighting.

Dreamcast Newswire

PSO Ver. 2 Pay2Play Debacle



Good news, Sega fans. Phantasy Star Online Version 2 will be released in the U.S. in mid-September. But before you start jumping around with schoolgirl glee, note the fine print: To play online in Ver. 2, you have to buy a $15 Hunter's License (via credit card) that gives you three months of play. Compare that to Japan, where you pay 1,000 yen (about $8) for the same amount of game time. Seems like a rip-off, eh? Sega wouldn't spill the details on whether or not the game's MSRP would be lowered (from $39.99) in the U.S. to offset the higher Hunter's License fee. Oh, and one more thing—we wanted to review PSO Ver. 2 this issue so you'd be able to read our take on it before it's released, but Sega's holding reviewable U.S. copies from the press, a new trend with the company. So look for the full review next issue.

Dreamcast Price Slashed

In late July, the *Hollywood Reporter* ran a story that the DC price would be cut to $79.99 (from $99.99) in mid-August. Sega wouldn't confirm with *EGM* whether or not the report was true, but quotes from Electronics Boutiques and Babbage's Etc. executives lend credence to the story. A further drop (to $49.99) is expected as early as the beginning of 2002 if hardware is still left over. Don't have one? Go get one (or two) when the price's right.

SegaNet Closes ISP Service

About a year after it started, SegaNet has closed its doors as an Internet Service Provider (ISP). Its servers will continue to live on as a place to play online games, but Sega will no longer provide the dial-up access. Previous SegaNet users were shifted over to Earthlink, who will offer users Internet access at the same monthly fee ($19.95/month). If you got in on one of the deals Sega was offering (like the DC free with two years of SegaNet) you're hereby let off the hook and can cancel the Earthlink service at any time. And you get to keep the refund check. Hooray, money!

SEGANET

VIDEO GAME SHOW

I Want My VGTV

Video gamers will soon have their own cable channel, called G4 (Games, Games, Games, Games?). Comcast, the same group who turned E! from a channel that covered movies into *Wild On Boobies*, will do the honors. It's set to go on the air on a cable box near you in 2002.

Electric Playground

Can't wait 'til 2002 to watch a TV show about games? Then check out *Electric Playground* (Discovery Science Channel, Fridays @ 7:30 p.m.), a weekly half hour covering the latest and greatest, hosted by Victor Lucas and Tommy Tallarico (below).

Photo by Dave Buzzard Photography

More GameCubes Than You Can Shake A Stick At

If the number of units a company ships of a new game system is any indication on their belief it'll succeed, then Nintendo is ready to take over the world. The company will deliver 500,000 units for the system's Sept. 14 launch in Japan, and 1.1 million (!) for the U.S. on Nov. 5. By the end of the year, Nintendo will ship another 900,000 units in Japan, bringing that country's total to 1.4 million. All we can say is...that's a lotta systems at once.

Ubi Does 19 for GC

Ubi Soft has 19 GameCube titles in the works. Tarzan, based on the Disney animated movie, will make it out first, with a projected December release date. Other games will follow in 2002, including Batman Vengeance, which is also coming for PS2 (see preview this issue).

WWF Body Slams Cube

Can GameCube smell what The Rock is cookin'? Yes! THQ is bringing the action of WWF wrestling to Nintendo's boxy system in 2002. It doesn't have a name yet (it might be an extension of the Wrestlemania line that started on N64), but it will be a series exclusive to the GC, like SmackDown! for PS2 and Raw Is War for Xbox.

Tron Gets Back Online

In 1982, *Tron* was the first movie to get "inside" the video game world, and in the near future we'll be able to get inside the world of Tron, too. A Tron video game is being prepped for a 2003 release on PC/Xbox/other platforms. That'll come just before the movie sequel hits theaters, tentatively called *Tron 2.0*. Finally, on Jan. 15, 2002 we'll see a re-release of the original film on DVD with a plethora of special-edition features. End of line...

Take Lara for a Ride

We know it, you know it. You've always wished you could take Lara Croft for a, uh, spin. And by that we mean travel with her on her adventures. Soon you'll be able to, as Tomb Raider: The Ride will hit Paramount's King's Island near Cincinnati, Ohio, in 2002. Guest adventurers will strap in for a wild ride of dejá vú as the ride re-creates scenes from the video games and the *Tomb Raider* movie.

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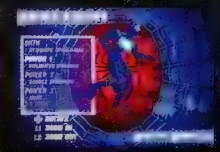

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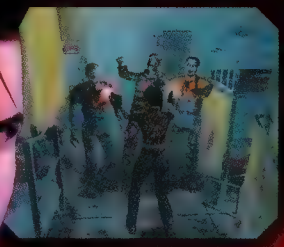

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T A L

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RESIDENT EVIL CODE: Veronica X

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PlayStation®2

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AFTERTHOUGHTS: Gran Turismo 3 A-spec

In each installment of Afterthoughts, *EGM* takes a game that's already on store shelves and asks the developers for their thoughts, post-release. This month, we chose Sony's Gran Turismo 3: A-spec. After he finished meeting and greeting a couple hundred of his biggest fans at Rockefeller Center's Electronics Boutique (NYC) for the U.S. launch on July 10, we caught up with Kazunori in a little café outside his hotel. Between cigarettes, he gave us his thoughts on his latest creation and the future of the series.

EGM: Congratulations on the success GT3's had so far. Were you surprised at the huge number of people who showed up for the U.S. launch this morning?

Kazunori Yamauchi: Ever since GT1 we've never been super confident about the titles' launch. We've never just thought "we're better than so-and-so." There's always that little worry in the back of our heads. I don't think that feeling will ever go away. Luckily, so far, when we've released the GT games, the users have caught on to what we've provided.

EGM: Will you ever include car damage?

KY: I'd like to in the future. There are two main hurdles we'd have to clear for that to happen. One is to obtain car manufacturers' approval to include damaged cars. Normally, they don't want to see their cars busted up.

If they do say yes, the next problem would be that, because GT is a series that emphasizes the realism of driving and the feedback of the car, we would have to implement what happens to the car when it's damaged. That has to be real. We don't want cars just banged up or blowing up in the end and burning. It's not that simple. You'd have multiple ways of destroying your car, and we'd want to simulate that.

EGM: The AI in Professional mode is pretty difficult, but in Simulation mode, cars run a lot slower and ignore the player. Why?

KY: As you pointed out, there is a slight difference. But even in the Simulation mode, as you proceed in the game there are different leagues: Amateur, Beginner and Professional. In the Professional League—probably more than halfway through the game—the difficulty level is very close to the Professional mode in the Arcade section.

"We made a new discovery that made racing on the dirt feel much more realistic and exciting."

However, I do admit that the AI is not at a level where it's more human. It's not emotional, trying to block you, cut you off, whatever. That means there is room for improvement in the future of the series. That's an area we're obviously studying.

To add to that, the level of the AI has increased incredibly in the sense that the computer cars are in the same exact environment as the players as far as road conditions. If the car slips, they have to counter-steer and get the cars back online and on track like the players do. We know of no other game in which the computer AI calculates that far for all the other competing cars. In those terms, I think the AI has advanced quite significantly.

EGM: Why can't you do racing mods in GT3 like you could in the first two games?

KY: Honestly speaking, it was a time aspect. In order to allow all cars to have standard and modified versions, you'd have to create double the amount of car models. We have roughly 200 cars in the game, so we'd have had to create 400 models. In future games, I'd like to bring that feature back.

EGM: Can you explain the difference between a new and a broken-in car?

KY: When users buy a car brand-new and the odometer says zero, the car is not at its full potential yet. They have to break it in. So it starts at a certain level, then gradually increases up to 100% potential. It stays there for a period of time, then gradually starts to slide down.

EGM: So if you race one car a lot, you'll need to buy a newer version of it again?

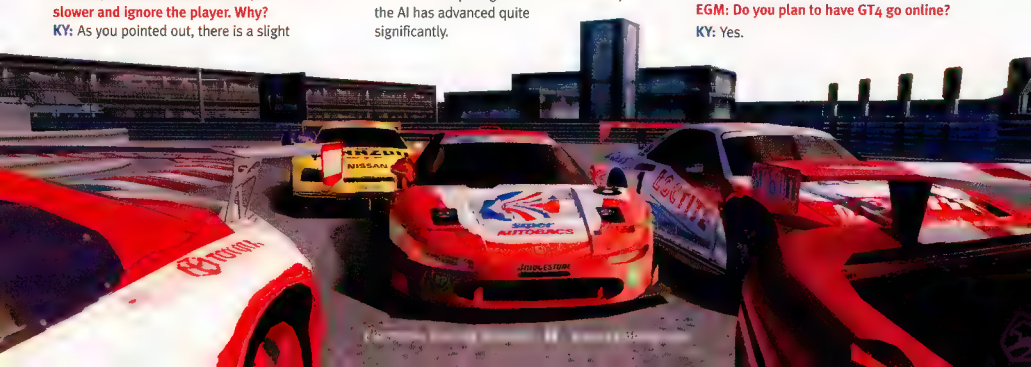
KY: Yes. Even though we took out the used car aspect in terms of buying, the theory is still there. By adding the odometer and having to get your car broken in, users will have to decide on their own if a car is getting a little too old or has too much mileage. Then they decide if they have to buy a new one.

EGM: What's your favorite car in the game?

KY: I like the Mazda RX-7, the Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution V and the winner of Le Mans in 1993, the Mazda 787B.

EGM: Do you plan to have GT4 go online?

KY: Yes.



"I was in the office testing the Rally mode heavily. Then I went and drove the actual car on the dirt and realized how close we were. Only then did I realize, 'Ah! I finally got it.' I'm quite happy with it now."

EGM: Is that something you meant for GT3?

KY: The network issue was not in the original game plan. From my point of view, I wanted GT3 to be the ultimate stand-alone software title.

EGM: That said, are you happy with GT3?

KY: During the GT series, there was never a time when I was completely happy. Even with GT3, there were many issues I was not satisfied with up to the very end. So even when it is complete, there's never a time that I'm 100 percent sure about the title. There are always aspects that I'll look back and say, "Maybe this, maybe that."

EGM: The rally racing in GT3 is noticeably better. Is that something you concentrated on?

KY: Yes, we did spend a lot of time developing the Rally mode. Compared to GT2, which was based more on theory, we redesigned the physics behind the car feedback. We made a completely new discovery—I can't give you the details—but a new discovery that, when added to the car's feedback, made racing on dirt feel much more realistic and exciting.

Later, I got a chance to drive a Lancer Evolution VII on the dirt. Before this experience, I was in the office testing the Rally mode heavily. I went and drove the actual car on the dirt and realized how close we were. Only then did I realize, "Ah! I finally got it." I'm quite happy with it now.

EGM: Speaking of testing the cars in the game, did you actually test out any Formula 1 cars?

KY: Actually I haven't had the chance to drive one. I think that because of the physics and calculations we have for the game, it's probably closer than any other game in terms of a Formula-type car. But, it's probably not right. There must be something wrong with it. That's also an area I'd like to study and improve. The current fantasy Formula models are kind of an experiment in the early stages.

EGM: There was a rumor that finishing GT3 100 percent might unlock either Motor Toon or Omega Boost. Any truth to that?

KY: Honestly, we did think of it. We have all the data of past games, and we can always go back and dig it up. We were even talking about adding segments of games we've developed to run at 60 frames per second to see what they would look like, just for fun. In the end we ran out of time. But we haven't given up on the idea. Maybe in the future it might pop up again.

EGM: How come you can't race backward on Laguna Seca or Côte d'Azur?

KY: I just wanted to pay respect to the real-life courses, so I didn't want to fiddle with them. At a real-life course, going reverse is the ultimate taboo. So that's why I didn't include reverse mode for those two courses.

REVIEW FLASHBACK

GT was born before the PS2 could help realize Yamauchi's vision. Here's what we said about the first two GTs:

Gran Turismo

John Ricciardi said: "Get used to this quote, 'cause you're gonna hear it a lot: 'Gran Turismo is the best racing game of all time.'"

9.0 9.0 9.5 9.5

Gran Turismo 2

John Davison said: "Every time you play it and try something new, it amazes you even more with its intricate attention to detail..."

10 10 10 10

EGM: Did any of the manufacturers have a problem with racing on actual streets in the Tokyo Course?

KY: So the players are not mislead into thinking it's real-life street racing, there were some requests to make it obvious that although we're in a real city, this track is designed as a race course and that blockades are clearly placed. There were fences, grandstands and billboards to make it look like a circuit that's designed off a street. More like the F1 Indianapolis or Le Mans.

Unfortunately that's all the space we have for Afterthoughts this month. But Mr. Yamauchi loves to talk about his game. So you can find the answers to the rest of our questions—such as why used cars were taken out of GT3 and what real-life courses might be included in GT4—at www.egmmag.com.

—Greg Sewart

Start Your Engines

"I've been in line since 8:30 last night for this game, and it was all worth it!" beamed Brooklyn's Bill Diver as he proudly displayed his copy of GT3. Diver was the first of over 200 people to buy the U.S. version of the game on July 10 in New York City.

The real treat, however, was the opportunity for gamers to meet with GT3 Producer Kazunori Yamauchi and 2001 Indy 500 champion Helio Castronevez (both pictured at right). The two even put on a show for the fans when they competed for bragging rights at Laguna Seca. Yamauchi squeaked by Helio on the final turn to take the victory.

Following the race Kazunori was quite pleased with the experience: "It made me realize how good the simulation in the game is. A professional driver could warm up for five minutes and have a pretty good battle with me. It's exactly what I was aiming for in the game."

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"Prepare to get blown away."

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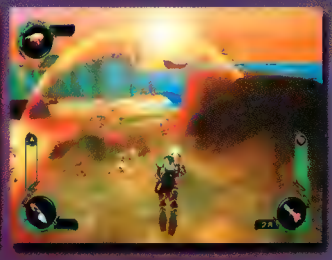

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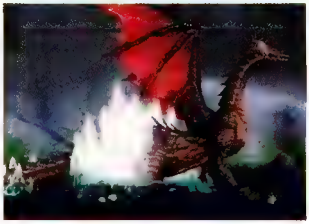
WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Final Fantasy has been around forever, and its characters are some of the most memorable in any game series. Ever wonder how the team gets fresh inspiration for names and character development? Run on down to http://s3.rpgclassics.com/ffcompendium/h/name.shtml for some explanation and speculation.

Square's Final Frontier

Square appeals to spirits within for Final Fantasy XI, the series' leap to online



Right about the time Final Fantasy X arrives in the States next spring, Japanese gamers will be taking Square's flagship franchise online with Final Fantasy XI. New information on the game and the PlayOnline network that will support it has surfaced in the form of a promotional disc packed in with the Japanese FFX. From the gameplay shots we saw, this sucker's a whole new ball of wax.

The most drastic change in FFXI, apart from going online, is the game's more serious medieval style. In contrast to the fantastic settings and cutesy characters Square is notorious for, FFXI's world is teeming with traditional dragon-slaying knights traversing an earthy countryside. That's not to say that Square won't have its share of oddities and abnormalities, though (take a look at the Pikmin-eating beast of blue pictured at bottom, center). However the game looks, with producer Hiromichi Tanaka (Xenogears, Chrono Cross) and FF mainstay Hironobu Sakaguchi on the project, it's probably not going to suck.

First things first. It's tough to play Final Fantasy with your international friends without a network to support it, so Square is launching PlayOnline with FFXI. This subscriber service will allow you to hook into FF servers and perform basic functions like e-mail and Web browsing via an exclusive browser (included with the game). While Square's original plans called for more mainstream applications as well, such as downloading music and sports scores, it now looks like PlayOnline will keep its sights on supporting the potentially huge FFXI userbase. The service will support a number of minigames, including the Tetra Master card game from Final Fantasy IX. Nice, now how about some Chocobo racing online?

Phantasy Star Online players may be a tad skeptical—is PlayOnline going to be around long enough that we should invest in all the gear, or will it be the Dreamcast/SegaNet fiasco all over again? Well, Square says that PlayOnline needs 300,000 subscribers to stay afloat (PSO has 200,000), so if you consider FF's relative popularity, it's not time to worry yet.

With all the competitive shenanigans going on between next-gen hardware makers, we may just see FFXI on a Box or a Cube, but it's only been confirmed for PS2 and PC so far. Let's hope Square and Nintendo patch things up, at least, so we can go online with PSO2 and FFIX without everyone having to buy seven different game consoles. Meanwhile, FFXI and PlayOnline go into test this fall in Japan, so we'll have updates as they come.

Attracter Trailer

The Japanese Final Fantasy X comes with a pretty cool promo for Final Fantasy XI and the PlayOnline service. It tells a touching tale of love online, which we've outlined in the pictures and captions below. So play Final Fantasy XI, and this could happen to you!

Meet Natsumi: exciteable Japanese student and FFXI player who longs for...

...this guy, the studly young man who also plays FFXI online and works part time...

...at this fast-food stand, and can somehow still afford to scrape up rent for...

...this swank house, where he retires each evening to play FFXI with Natsumi and...

...guys like this geeky chap, who enjoy PlayOnline and look for hot chicks via...

...their log-in screens, which is how players hook up to play FFXI after a quick...

...phone call, but little does Natsumi know the online friend she calls to set up a game is...

...actually the same dude from the pushcart, but neither catches on until...

...they bump paths. Natsumi makes the connection, the relationship blooms...

...and our heroine reflects on her first physical date with the mystery FFXI man.

Wizards, Warriors Attend FF Fan Day

A legion of warriors, mages and sorceresses (cleverly disguised as a horde of hardcore gamers) descended upon Sony's San Francisco-based Metreon shopping center on the evening of July 10, 2001. However, the reason for their convergence was not some occult sacrifice, as they were all there to celebrate the wonderment of Final Fantasy. Square sponsored a party at the Metreon PlayStation store, attracting thousands of eager fans with free goodies, phat beats, a costume contest, a charity auction for autographed Square memorabilia, and a chance to see a special [illegible] of *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*.

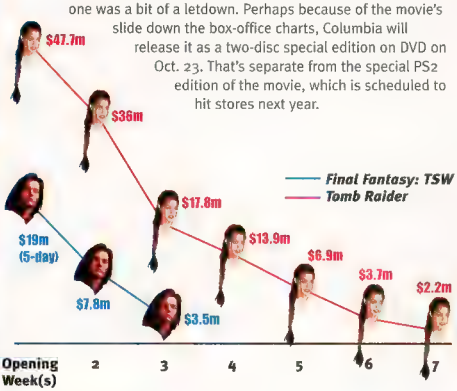
Director Hironobu Sakaguchi was [illegible] lucky preview attendees, and he got a bit misty-eyed when the crowd erupted into a thunderous standing ovation. Better than having the fan[illegible] attempt [illegible] on him.

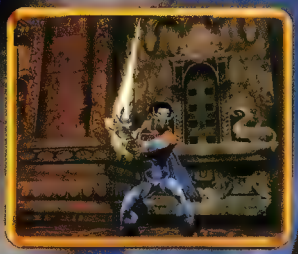
Sakaguchi takes his seat...down in front.

A sorceress tries hard to fit in with the other humans.

Fantasy or Flop?

Call it whatever you want, but *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*'s showing at the box office was less than stellar. As of this writing, FF had barely cleared the $30 million mark. Considering that its estimated production cost topped $140 million, it's safe to say this one was a bit of a letdown. Perhaps because of the movie's slide down the box-office charts, Columbia will release it as a two-disc special edition on DVD on Oct. 23. That's separate from the special PS2 edition of the movie, which is scheduled to hit stores next year.





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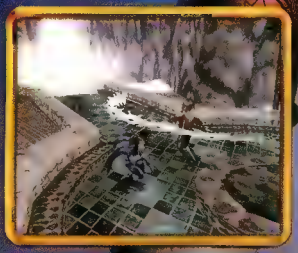

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THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHICAGO

Do you wonder what a trip to *EGM*'s offices would really be like? Hsu & Chan creator Jeremy "Norm" Scott recently lived that dream. And if his trip is any indication, you'll want to stay the hell away (that means you!). You can read about Norm's recent visit here by pointing your browser to http://www.ape-law.com/evilmonkey/hsuchan.htm

Hard Drivin'

EGM Takes Sony's PlayStation 2 Hard Drive for a Spin

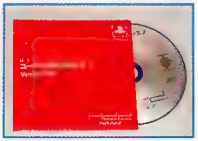
On July 19, Sony CEI released the PS2 Hard Disk Drive (HDD) in Japan. Ten-thousand drives—7500 external and 2500 internal, at $150 and $145, respectively—went out to those lucky enough to place their order via PlayStation.com. Why an external model? Early Japanese PS2s have a PCMCIA card slot in the back instead of the expansion bay seen on U.S. and newer Japanese-model systems.

Since our Japanese PS2s are the old type, we picked up an external drive and headed for a secluded location (my cube) to test it out.

One look at the external drive and you can tell it's going to be a tough customer. It's big, bulky, and has another power cord that you're gonna have to find a plug for. Thankfully, the internal model that the U.S. gets will run on the PS2's power. It's also heavy—the internal will add a healthy amount of weight to the system.

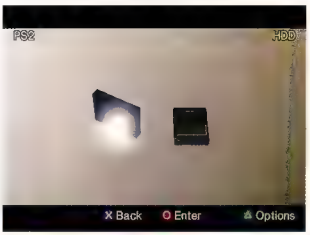
Installing the drive was a fairly painless process. That is, once I figured out that the HDD turns itself on only after you've loaded up the included Utility Disc. The disc updates the Browser and system file on your memory card so that the HDD powers on when you boot up. The HDD is then visible in the Browser.

OK, so what do you use it for? Right now, games like FFX, Capcom Vs. SNK 2 and some Konami music games use it for data caching; you install the game on the drive so the system reads it from there and not a CD, cutting the load time down significantly (depending on the game). Take the A-Train 2001 is the only current (Japanese) release to use it for game customization and data.



The HDD comes in a red box (top left), distinguishing it from the PS2 system, controllers or memory cards. You install it using the handy lil' Utility Disc (top right).

Once you boot up the Utility Disc, you can format the drive, install the new browser software (so it'll recognize it), and download the newest version of the DVD Player software. The interface will probably be slightly different when the drive is released in the U.S. in November.



A big drawback is that (at this point, anyway) you cannot store memory card saves on the drive. That would've been nice for those of us who have multiple memory cards.

As for networking abilities, the Japanese drive only includes the ethernet plug (the U.S. Network Adapter will have an additional 56k modem), which is the part of the card that slides into the PCMCIA port. You're also assigned a Multimedia Access Control code, which will protect your information once network gaming and browsing are available.

The HDD will become a valuable tool once more games actually *use* it for saves and customization. Is faster loading enough of a benefit to justify the cost? For FFX, the difference is negligible (see below). The HDD will be cheaper in the U.S. since the Network Adapter is sold separately (for $40), but I hope games start using it for more than data caching.

—Chris Johnston

Final Fantasy... Only Faster

One of the first games to support the HDD is Square's FFX. It uses the drive as a cache, but unlike the Xbox HDD where data can be swapped on the fly, you install the whole thing onto it and play from there. It cuts the amount of load time, but since FFX doesn't have much anyway, it's hardly noticeable at the beginning. It only becomes apparent during the later parts of the game.

Standard stuff to see on a title screen. But what's this? Install? That's the option you want when you install the game to the hard drive.

During the 15 or so minutes it takes to install, you can twiddle your thumbs, and take a look at some artwork as you watch this gauge rise.

Voila! FFX is installed on the drive.

It's different down here.

Down here, introductions are rarely in the form of a handshake.

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Down here, pain is temporary. Your name on the Cup lasts forever.

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easports.com

PlayStation.2 XBOX NINTENDO GAMECUBE GAME BOY COLOR PC EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

INASCAR NFL PLAYERS INC NHLPA

KLONOA: DOOR TO BANKRUPTCY

Klonoa 2 just came out for PS2, but if you missed the first one you're going to pay a pretty penny for it. A new or mint-in-box copy of Klonoa: Door to Phantomile (PS1) will run you over $100 on eBay, with some auctions just for the disc getting well over $50. If you're gonna bid on one, beware: Some are bootlegs. Make sure you get a production copy.

Ever Wondered?

Each month, we solve the gaming mysteries that keep you up all night and scratching your noggin all day. It's just like the TV show *Unsolved Mysteries*, except without that gravelly voiced old dude from *Airplane!*

No-Play Zone

Q: Why do I have to turn off my Game Boy on planes during takeoff and landing?

A: Regulation 121.306(a) of the Federal Aviation Administration explicitly limits your right to operate "any portable electronic device on any U.S.-registered civil aircraft." Why the airborne buzzkill? Your Game Boy emits a tiny blip of radiation that could potentially screw with the plane's instrument systems and radio chatter with the control tower. In fact, the FAA has logged more than 45,000 mid-air anomalies—everything from phony warning lights to planes veering off course—linked to passengers fiddling with laptops, Walkmans and, yes, portable games. So don't ask questions; just find something else to do during those agonizing 20 minutes of gamelessness while your plane ascends above 10,000 feet, the minimum altitude at which you can power on. Why not read a fascinating article in the latest issue of *EGM*, available in all finer airport bookstores.

Empty Pocket

Q: Why didn't the PocketStation come to the U.S.?

A: After all, the little gizmo—a cross between a memory card and a Tamagotchi—was a nifty device. Sony was planning a U.S. release for March 1999, but the PocketStation was so popular in Japan that there weren't enough units to go around in its home country, let alone worldwide. By the time supply caught up with demand and a U.S. release became feasible, the PocketStation ran into a rocky road of hurdles that doomed its Stateside chances. For starters, Sony was readying the PS2 and had other things to worry about. The PocketStation also suffered from short battery life (you'd be lucky to get two days out of it). And developer support dwindled because the gizmo had been so rare for so long. Then there was the lack of a U.S. killer app. The virtual-pet title Doko Demo Issho may have moved a mountain of PocketStations in Japan, but it's not exactly the kind of game that would sell big here. So despite support in a few U.S. games (such as Final Fantasy VIII and Ridge Racer Type 4), the little sucker never saw the light of day. Still, rumors of a color PocketStation 2 do persist...

FFVIII's Chocobo World PocketStation game

—Chris Baker

Got a gaming mystery? E-mail it to EGM@ziffdavis.com with the subject header "Ever wondered?" and we'll solve it for you.

Video Games As Art?

Are video games a valid form of art? And if so, where do art and games intersect? To explore these and other academic issues, the San Francisco Media Arts Council held their second symposium, titled Artcade: Exploring the Relationship Between Video Games and Art. Panelists for the event, which took place at the SF Museum of Modern Art, included Nolan Bushnell, founder of Atari; Will Wright, mastermind behind PC-game phenomenon The Sims; and art theorists Lev Manovich and Brenda Laurel. The discussion ranged from video games as representative of the 21st-century epic, to its lack of irony—a characteristic that's intrinsic to modern art. Wright concluded the evening to hoots and hollers when he used the evolution of art history as an allegory for where gaming has been and will hopefully go. Afterward, we couldn't help but feel the whole occasion was kind of like E3 meets Sprockets. And now we will dance. *—Che Chou*

Atari founder Nolan Bushnell gets artsy.

Activision Publishes Report

Next summer, we'll all be enjoying the Tom Cruise/Steven Spielberg sci-fi flick, *Minority Report* in theaters. Soon after, we'll be able to play the game at home. Activision has landed the rights to the game, which will be published on PCs and consoles. Written by Philip K. Dick (who also penned *Blade Runner*), the story follows a cop who has been accused of committing a crime in the future and must figure out how it will happen so he can stop it in time and clear his name.

Tomb Raider: The Apology

In other news, Eidos, proprietors of the Tomb Raider games, made a public apology to French archeologist Jean-Yves Empereur for accidentally using his likeness in Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation. Maybe they'll apologize for the game next.

STICK AND RUDDER

Japanese pilot wannabes who like to drive their jets with something heftier than the dual shock can spring for this special flight-stick controller from peripheral manufacturer HORI, which will be released simultaneously with Ace Combat 4. Tough luck for U.S. flyboys—the stick ain't coming here.

HIGH AND MIGHTY

Namco's Ace Combat 4 Unleashes Photorealistic Flight Combat on PS2

Armchair jet jockeys who get their *Top Gun* kicks on towering PCs might look down their nosecones at us console gamers, just because our flight-combat games are heavy on arcade action and light on realism. But you know what? Screw them. We might not know a velocity-vector doohickey from an angle-of-attack whatsit, but very soon we'll have a plane game that licks PC sims in one crucial department: the visuals. Namco's Ace Combat 4: Shattered Skies, due in early November for PlayStation 2, looks better than anything those PC players drive around the virtual sky with their fancy joysticks and rudder gizmos.

These screens tell the tale. Fully 3D volumetric clouds billow in the sky. Lush hills and mountains roll into the hazy distance. The hyper-detailed plane models stream contrails behind them during dogfights (which are best viewed via the multiple-camera-angle replays). Sunlight glints off the ocean's surface—and even off the glass of your heads-up display. And wait until you see the game in MACH-1 motion. AC4 delivers a smooth and speedy flight experience rivaled only by PC sims running on the most up-to-date hardware.

But make no mistake: The AC series—by far the best-selling flight franchise on the consoles—still emphasizes arcade-style action over true-to-life simulation. "We believe it's extremely fun to fly freely in the 3D environment and experience the sensation of being an ace pilot," says Namco project director Hiroyuki Ichiyanagi, who previously worked on Klonoa for the original PlayStation and is new to the Ace Combat series. "But if we pursue this concept too far, there would be many difficult and complicated controls that require more skills on the player's part, which would mean only a few people could really enjoy the game. We wanted to make sure we extracted just the fun aspect of simulators."

And basically, those fun aspects equate to lots of adrenalized dogfights and plain ol' blowing stuff up. AC4's 20 missions vary from simple intercept sorties ("Take out those incoming bombers!") to deep-

Kaboom! with a view: **Ace Combat 4 is the first game in the series to feature a visible virtual cockpit, complete with animated gauges.**

strike air raids in enemy territory. And every level features varying photorealistic terrain in all manner of weather conditions. One mission, for instance, has you screaming over an enemy beach, blasting tanks before your ally's landing craft can reach shore. It's set during a blinding downpour, with raindrops whizzing past your canopy. If you throttle up into a straight vertical climb, you can break through the storm clouds into a dazzling blue sky, then rudder hard Earthward and plunge into the pea-soup storm again. Another mission is a sneak attack on oil rigs and an enemy seaport at night. It's all similar to the stuff you did in previous PlayStation installments, except with more room to search and destroy. "The PS2 hardware allowed us to use larger amounts of aerial and ground objects," Ichiyanagi says, "so we could feature larger campaigns."

Runway and carrier landings, used sparsely in the last two AC titles, factor heavily into the gameplay now. Any time you're running low on weapons, you can turn tail and flee the danger zone. Every mission area offers a return zone—marked on your map by a dotted line—where you can land for re-arming and repairs. Cross the line and your plane automatically drops its landing gear. Your heads-up display kicks into an instrument-landing system to help you line up with the airport runway or carrier. All you have to do is guide your plane in for a soft touchdown. Once the ground crew has done its thing, you can power up for takeoff and rejoin the battle.

AC4 also features much better sound effects than any previous game in the series—mainly because the team broke out their microphones and went on a field trip. "We visited the [Japanese Air Force's] air base to record the sounds of jet engines, explosions, gunshots, etc., during their drills," Ichiyanagi tells us. On top of all the screaming afterburners and rocking explosions, the team layered an impressive amount of radio chatter. You now go into most missions with a full flight of seven or more wingmates, who bark orders, offer updates on their mission objectives, and warn you when bogies close in. You can even listen in on enemy radio transmissions. It's the most chatter in a console sim yet, and it adds a lot to the you-are-there experience.

Unlike Ace Combat 3, which packed such a complex universe and cast of intertwined characters that Namco essentially nixed the game's entire storyline for the U.S. version, AC4 offers a streamlined plot. It's set in the dismal near future on a fictional war-torn

Who Wants To Be A Pilot?

If life really imitates art, isn't it high time you were buzzing control towers and nude beaches in a plane of your own? Here are three ways to earn your wings...

To fly small planes...

The cheapest way into the mile-high club, a private pilot's license will run you about $4,000, which covers the cost of the month-long ground school and 40 hours of instructional flight time required by the FAA. You gotta be at least 16 years old to take lessons—and you'll need to earn additional certificates to fly multi-engine planes or in bad weather—but hey, imagine picking up your prom date in a Cessna! "Allow me to tighten your flight harness, Heather."

To fly commercial airplanes...

Get ready to empty your bank account if you're really serious about this whole flying thing. More and more specialized schools—such as Comair Aviation in Sanford, Fla.—are offering what's called "ab initio" flight-training programs, which'll take you from a wee groundling all the way to a full-fledged airline flight captain who can point out dull scenery from 30,000 feet with the best of them. Expect to shell out about $30,000 for a pro-pilot program, which can last several years. But then some of those stewardesses are pretty hot. "My tray table's in its fully upright and locked position, Linda."

To fly fighter jets...

Here's the toughest ticket of all. To turn and burn for the U.S. Air Force or Navy, your best bet is to get into their respective military academies, which ain't easy (heck, you need a congressman's recommendation to get into the Air Force Academy). The other route is to get a four-year college degree in a technical field, join your campus ROTC, get excellent grades, brush your teeth three times a day, keep your room tidy, and maybe, just maybe, you'll be plucked from the Air Force or Navy's Officer Candidate School to become a bona-fide fighter jock. And chicks dig fighter jocks. "Permission to buzz your tower, Mona?"

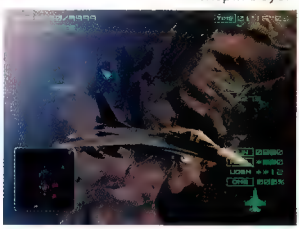
Hey, importers: All the dialog and displays in AC4 are in English, in case you plan on nabbing the game when it hits Japan in September.

continent pocked with asteroid impacts. You play a pilot hellbent on revenge after his parents were killed when he was young, the dumb-luck victims of a fighter plane that crashed into their house. The game opens with watercolor images of your character watching the jet crash, then spying the plane that shot the fighter from the sky. You vow to one day kill this fighter pilot who has just, however inadvertently, murdered your folks. The rest of the game's cutscenes unfold in these paintings along with the narration of your character.

You start your quest for revenge in the clumsy Vietnam-era F-4 fighter. But as you progress through the missions, you'll earn money you can put toward more advanced fighter jets. AC4 packs 20 planes in all, including the brutal A-10 tank killer, the nimble F-16 and the overpriced F-117 stealth fighter. You'll also have the option to buy specialized weapons for your jet. Why not load up cluster bombs for your run over enemy oil fields? And in another first for the series, each fighter has its own virtual cockpit, from which you can peer around with the right analog stick. (As in AC3, holding the Triangle button will lock enemy targets in your view.) Switching on the virtual cockpit limits your view—especially in jets with bulky airframes—but it adds a touch more realism to the game (your canopy glass even filters the sunlight with a dull tinge).

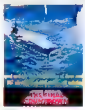
Namco has no plans to include online modes for this installment, but the game will support the upcoming hard drive for faster loading times, as well as a widescreen mode for gamers craving a panoramic view of the action. AC4 even makes use of the PS2 controller's analog buttons. Varying pressure on the Square button, for instance, will zoom the map, while pressing the shoulder buttons with all your might applies hard rudder for tighter turning. OK, so maybe the PS2 pad isn't as authentic as the high-end flight yolks PC gamers use for their flight games, but when those guys show us a sim that looks this good and runs on a $300 machine, we'll shut up.

—Crispin Boyer



Straight-To-Video Mood Movies

Sure, you could watch *Top Gun* on TBS to get into the Ace Combat mood, but we're not letting you off that easy. Instead, we've prepared this list of video-only flops that happen to involve jets shooting stuff. Why ride into the crap-flick danger zone? Goose would have wanted it this way.

THE FLICK...	THE GIST...
 THE FINAL COUNTDOWN	A U.S. aircraft carrier runs into a "time storm" and is wooshed back to the day before the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor. We get one nifty dogfight between our jets and Japanese Zeroes, but then the movie wusses out: The crew heads home before splashing the enemy strike force. Talk about a cockpit tease.
IRON EAGLE III: ACES	A squadron of WWII vets stage an air raid on a cocaine factory in a daring mission to wipe out all '80s movie villains once and for all. Sounds exciting, right? So why does Lou Gossett Jr. look so unhappy on the box? Doesn't he see the cool explosion or hot Rambo girl next to him?
THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT 2	Thank goodness Hollywood listened to the tens of dozens of the first flick's fans and made this sequel, probably the third or fourth greatest movie ever made about a stealth fighter sent back in time and used by the Nazis to win World War II.
STEALTH FIGHTER	Rapper, actor and part-time pimp Ice-T plays a Naval pilot turned mercenary who highjacks a Stealth Fighter and bombs military installations for the highest bidder. Let this be a lesson to you: Never leave the keys in your stealth fighter.

wounds will
heal...

REISSUED

Didn't score one of the limited edition Amano covers of *EGM*'s September issue? Head over to www.egmmag.com/Contest/ for a chance to win one of ten free copies. Or you can pay upwards of $25 for it on eBay if you prefer (ouch!).

DEVELOPER PROFILE

Vicarious Visions

Year founded: 1994
Location: Troy, NY
Web site: www.vvisions.com
# of people: 60

Worked on: Polaris SnoCross (PS/N64), Spider-Man (GBC) and Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 (GBA).
Current projects: PS1: Spider-Man 2 Enter: Electro; GBA: Spider-Man: Mysterio's Menace, Power Rangers: Time Force, Crash Bandicoot Advance and THPS3.
We heard THPS2 GBA has such excellent visuals because it overclocks the system...but that this sucks the juice from the batteries faster. True? It's true that THPS2 GBA sucks the batteries faster than most other games, but it's not because we overclocked it. Tony uses every last ounce of the CPU. Most games don't do this so the power consumption on average is lower. But because Tony constantly pushes every available CPU cycle, battery power is consumed faster than most other GBA games.
What game needs a 32-bit monkey buffer? (see Web site) All of our GBA games use VV's patent-pending 32-bit monkey buffer! Monkeys make 'em better!
Will you be working on any next-generation systems like PS2, Xbox or GameCube? Yep. We're proud of developing for all platforms. We currently have a PS2/Xbox title in the works and we're just starting up GameCube development.
Which are you most excited about? Each platform has its advantages and disadvantages. But many of us are looking forward to working on GC. There are some interesting gameplay possibilities with the GBA-GameCube connectivity and it's something we'll be working on in the near future...

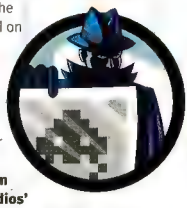
Quartermann - Game Gossip & Speculation

Welcome back to Q-Mann's rumor confectionary. I've been bakin' up some fine morsels this month, Game-oids. Time for The Q to get his groove thing on and spew forth the chewy nougat. Is this thing on? OK, here goes:

...Time to steamroll right into this month's juiciest of rumors. Enter **Xbox**...publishers have been alerted that hardware shipments in the first three months will be around **750,000 units**, not the 1 million number being thrown around earlier. The number of games available on day one (and the **exact starting lineup**) is constantly changing too. Instead of the PS2 mentality of last year (throwing as many titles as possible at the wall to see what sticks), **a front tier will launch with the system**, with a handful of additional titles hitting stores every week in November's launch period...

...Word from deep inside **The House of Bill** indicates that there isn't time to fix the problems with many games (*cough* **Azurik**) that were pushed ahead for launch. The gold-rush mentality is apparently taking its toll on the development teams, who are now worried their products won't "be all they can be" come Nov. 8. The best-looking games may end up being **Dead or Alive 3** and (if they make it) **Sega's titles**.... An Xbox-enhanced DVD for Spielberg's ***A.I.*** that included the movie and a bunch of neat lil' extras, which yours truly thought was fab to the max, was in the works but has been mysteriously yanked. At this point, the release of the **A.I. Xbox game may also be in trouble.** Let's all be honest with each other, did the idea of an A.I. game make much sense? No...OK, **don't think it's all bad news.** We still have a few months to go, and just like the PS2 launch there is a handful of games looking mighty fine (**Halo, Munch**...uh...yeah).

...The **GBA version of Tekken** that's coming this fall is gonna be rad. Based on the third game and Tag Tournament, it's got pseudo-rendered visuals so it looks like 3D but isn't, just like Tony Hawk. S'nice!... **ToeJam & Earl III**, sequel to one of the series The Q loved on Genesis, has reportedly been pulled from Dreamcast in order to give the game life on other next-gen platforms.... **Raven Blade, Retro Studios' ambitious GameCube action-RPG**, is a fresh victim of the axe. The remaining members of the development team were moved onto the troubled **Metroid Prime** project. Miyamoto is apparently still not pleased with its progress; we could find out more about its fate come Space World in late August....



...and, I'm spent. Another month, another bundle o' rumors. If you have something to say to The Q, drop me at line via e-mail at quartermann@ziffdavis.com. Until next time, Q-maniacs...

Paging Mr. Belmont

When we previewed the import of Castlevania Chronicles (PS1) last month, we had suspicions Konami would release it stateside. It seems our hunch was right. You can pick up the remake of the X68000 version in the U.S. in October. Also confirmed: a new Castlevania to follow up Circle of the Moon.

Castlevania Chronicles (PS1)

EA Nabs LOTR Gold

Electronic Arts is set to dance all over the grave of J.R.R. Tolkien. The company just signed a deal with New Line Cinema to develop multiple games based on the upcoming Lord of the Rings movie trilogy. Bilbo Baggins B-Ball Mania anyone?

Yu-Gi-Oh My!

Every time you turn around, there's another Japanese fad poised to possess our young, and this time it's Yu-Gi-Oh! Konami's bringing the card battle GBC game to the States in November. But don't worry—a TV show will hit Kids WB before then, as will trading cards and other merchandise. Yu-Gi-Oh! is the story of Yuugi, a spiky-haired brat who holds something called the "Millennium Puzzle." Hide your children now and prepare for the "Yu-Gi-Oh is evil" stories.

KONAMI
. . . but your
mind
will be
scarred
forever.
SILENT HILL 2
MATURE
M
Violence
Blood and Gore
PlayStation 2

The Top 20 Best-Selling Games of June 2001

For the first time in what seems like forever, there are five systems appearing in the top 10 this month. Even more surprising, one of them is the **Dreamcast**! (Finally!) Looks like the condemnation of **Sega**'s last console still isn't enough to slow **Sonic**'s star power. And who'd have thought **Pokémon Gold and Silver** would have slipped out of the top 10 so soon? Is **Nintendo**'s critter phenomenon finally settling down? We'll see if **Crystal** makes an appearance on this here chart before we make any predictions. We gotta cover our asses, after all. Meanwhile, looks like you've all bought plenty of **GBA** games...so go play!

1 Super Mario Advance
NEW! 9.0 Chris 8.0 Mark 8.0 Shoe GAME BOY ADVANCE
2 Twisted Metal: Black
Sony Computer Entertainment America
NEW! 8.5 Che 9.0 Kraig 8.0 Shoe PS2
3 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
NEW! 9.0 Crispin 9.0 Dean 7.5 Greg GAME BOY ADVANCE
4 NBA Street
Electronic Arts
NEW! 9.5 Dan L 8.5 Dean 7.5 Kraig PS2
5 Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons
Nintendo
10 Chris 9.0 Mark 9.5 John R GAME BOY COLOR
6 Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages
Nintendo
10 Chris 9.0 Mark 9.5 John R GAME BOY COLOR
7 Sonic Adventure 2
NEW! 7.0 Chris 8.0 Greg 7.5 Milkman
8 Castlevania: Circle of the Moon
NEW! 10 Che 9.5 Jonathan 9.0 Mark GAME BOY ADVANCE
9 F-Zero Maximum Velocity
NEW! 7.0 Dean 9.0 Greg 7.5 Jonathan GAME BOY ADVANCE
10 Mario Party 3
Nintendo
8.5 Chris 7.0 Jeanne 6.5 Shoe

11	Dark Cloud Sony Computer Entertainment America	PS2
12	Red Faction THQ	PS2
13	Pokémon Silver Nintendo	GAME BOY COLOR
14	Pokémon Gold Nintendo	GAME BOY COLOR
15	Rayman Advance Ubi Soft	GAME BOY ADVANCE NEW!
16	Namco Museum Namco	GAME BOY ADVANCE NEW!
17	Gran Turismo 2 Sony Computer Entertainment America	PS
18	Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX Activision	PS
19	GT Advance Racing THQ	GAME BOY ADVANCE NEW!
20	Final Fantasy Chronicles Square Electronic Arts	PS NEW!

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service. Call Kristin Barnett-von Korff at (516) 625-2481 for questions regarding this list. Chart description written by *EGM* staff. Greg enjoys pina coladas, getting caught in the rain, and long walks on the beach.

JAPAN TOP 10

1	Minna no Golf 3 Sony CEI	PS2
2	Final Fantasy X Square	PS2
3	Mario Kart Advance Nintendo	GAME BOY ADVANCE
4	Bakuten Shoot Beyblade Broccoli	GAME BOY COLOR
5	Growlancer II Atlus	PS2
6	Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec Sony CEI	PS2
7	Missing Blue Tonkin House	PS2
8	Shiren's Mysterious Dungeon GB2 Chun Soft	GAME BOY COLOR
9	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters 5 EXPERT Konami	GAME BOY ADVANCE
10	Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children Atlus	GAME BOY COLOR

It's all PS2 and Game Boy in this week's Japanese chart. So what is Bakuten Shoot Beyblade? It's based on the latest Japanese fad (propelled by a TV show, toys, comics and a GB game) where two people face off with these spinning tops that transform into monsters of some kind. Sounds like a winner, doesn't it?

Bakuten Shoot Beyblade

Source: Weekly Famitsu, week ending 8/2/2001

SPREAD THE WORD
PLAYSTATION 2
GAMECUBE
PC GAMES
DREAMCAST
YOUR WORLD YOUR GAMES
XBOX
PLAYSTATION 2
GAMECUBE/GBA
PC GAMES
DREAMCAST
EB
YOU'VE GOT THE BANDWIDTH
WE'VE GOT THE GAMES
Microsoft
MECHCOMMANDER®
INFOGRAMES
EUROPA UNIVERSALIS
EIDOS
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Compiled By Jonathan Dudlak jonathan_dudlak@ziffdavis.com

Coming Soon

September

Game Boy Advance

Columns—Sega	Puzzle
Doom—Activision	Action
MX 2002 Ricky Carmichael—THQ	Racing
Power Rangers Time Force—THQ	Action
Spider-Man Myst. Menace—Activision	Action
Tetris Worlds—THQ	Puzzle
X-Men—Activision	Action

PlayStation

Atari Anniversary Edition—Hasbro	Misc.
DDR Disney Mix—Konami	Music
One Piece Mansion—Capcom	Simulation
Sheep Raider—Infogrames	Puzzle
Spider-Man 2—Activision	Adventure
Syphon Filter 3—Sony CEA	Action
Tales of Destiny 2—Namco	RPG
X-Men: Mutant Acad. 2—Activision	Fighting

PlayStation 2

Arctic Thunder—Midway	Racing
Capcom vs. SNK 2—Capcom	Fighting
Duke Nukem—Rockstar	Action
ESPN Skateboarding—Konami	Sports
Ico—Sony CEA	Adventure
Okage: Shadow King—Sony CEA	RPG
Project Eden—Eidos	Action/Strategy
Silent Hill 2—Konami	Adventure
Silent Scope 2—Konami	Action
Soul Reaver 2—Eidos	Adventure
Spy Hunter—Midway	Action
Time Crisis 2—Namco	Light Gun

Dreamcast

Alone in the Dark—Infogrames	Adventure
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX—Activision	Sports
NFL 2K2—Sega	Sports
Ooga Booga—Sega	Action
Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2—Sega	RPG
Propeller Arena—Sega	Action

October

Game Boy Advance

Breath of Fire—Capcom	RPG
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX—Activision	Sports
Mega Man Battle Network—Capcom	Action
Shaun Palmer Snowboard—Activision	Sports

PlayStation

Arc the Lad Coll.—Working Designs	RPG
Castlevania Chronicles—Konami	Action

PlayStation 2

Batman Vengeance—Ubi Soft	Action
Evil Twin—Ubi Soft	Adventure
Giants: Citizen Kabuto—Interplay	Adventure
Grand Theft Auto III—Rockstar	Action
Half-Life—Sierra	Action
Harvest Moon—Crave	RPG
Kinetica—Sony CEA	Racing
Maximo—Sony CEA	Action
Max Payne—Rockstar	Action
NFL 2K2—Sega	Sports
Shaun Palmer Snowboarder—Activision	Sports
Smuggler's Run 2—Rockstar	Racing
WWF SmackDown! 3—THQ	Action

Dreamcast

Bomberman Online—Sega	Misc.
NBA 2K2—Sega	Sports
Shenmue II—Sega	Adventure
Tennis 2K2—Sega	Sports

November

GameCube

Luigi's Mansion—Nintendo	Adventure
Star Wars Rogue Leader—LucasArts	Action
Star Fox Adventures—Nintendo	Adventure
Sup. Smash Bros. Melee—Nintendo	Fighting

Xbox

Azurik: Rise of Perathia—Microsoft	Adv.
Halo—Microsoft	Action
Oddworld: Munch Oddysee—Microsoft	Adv.
Project Gotham—Microsoft	Racing

Game Boy Advance

Harry Potter—Electronic Arts	Adventure
Sonic the Hedgehog—Sega	Action
Spyro the Dragon—Sony CEA	Adventure

PlayStation

Dragon Warrior VII—Enix	RPG
Harry Potter—Electronic Arts	Adventure
Mega Man 6—Capcom	Action
Tony Hawk 3—Activision	Sports
Twisted Metal Sml. Brawl—Sony CEA	Action

PlayStation 2

Blood Omen 2—Eidos	Adventure
Crash Bandicoot—Universal	Action
Deus Ex—Eidos	Action
Devil May Cry—Capcom	Adventure
Frequency—Sony CEA	Music
Herdy Gerdy—Eidos	Adventure
Metal Gear Solid 2—Konami	Action
Police 911—Konami	Action
SSX Tricky—Electronic Arts	Sports
Tetris Worlds—THQ	Puzzle
Tony Hawk 3—Activision	Sports

Dreamcast

Evil Twin—Ubi Soft	Adventure

IMPORT CALENDAR

PaRappa the Rapper 2

Import Pick of the Month: Sony CEI's PaRappa the Rapper 2 (PS2). Kick, punch, it's all in the mind! It's been a few years, but finally the Hip Hop Hero is back. PaRappa and his friends must once again combat evil using unoffensive rap music (see our preview on page 84). Like Parappa says, you gotta believe!

PlayStation

9/13 Gamera 2000 (rerelease), Four Winds (Action)
9/20 Dance Dance Revolution 5th Mix, Konami (Dance)

PlayStation 2

8/30 PaRappa the Rapper 2, SCEI (Music)
9/13 Capcom Vs. SNK2 Millionaire Fighting 2001, Capcom (Fighting)
9/20 Gitadora! Guitar Freaks 4th Mix & Drummania 3rd Mix, Konami (Music)
9/27 Silent Hill 2, Konami (Survival Horror)
Sept. Sky Gunner, SCEI (Shooter)
10/4 King's Field IV, From Software (RPG)

Dreamcast

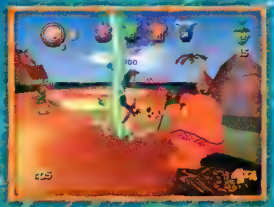
8/30 Get Bass 2, Sega (Fishing)
9/6 Shenmue II, Sega (Adventure)
9/6 Sega Extreme Sports, Sega (Sports)
9/13 Capcom Vs. SNK 2 Millionaire Fighting 2001, Capcom (Fighting)
9/13 Cosmic Smash, Sega (Action)
9/27 Garou: Mark of the Wolves, SNK (Fighting)

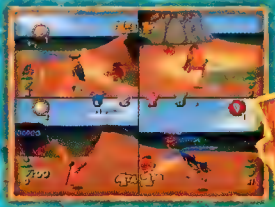
Game Boy Advance

8/21 Wario Land Advance, Nintendo (Action)
9/13 Genso Suikoden Card Stories, Konami (Misc.)

*Schedule subject to change without notice. Consult your local import game store for the latest release info. *EGM* is not responsible for monkeys on the loose.

In this game of survival you're not voted off the island, you're zapped, run over and blown away.





Ooga Booga

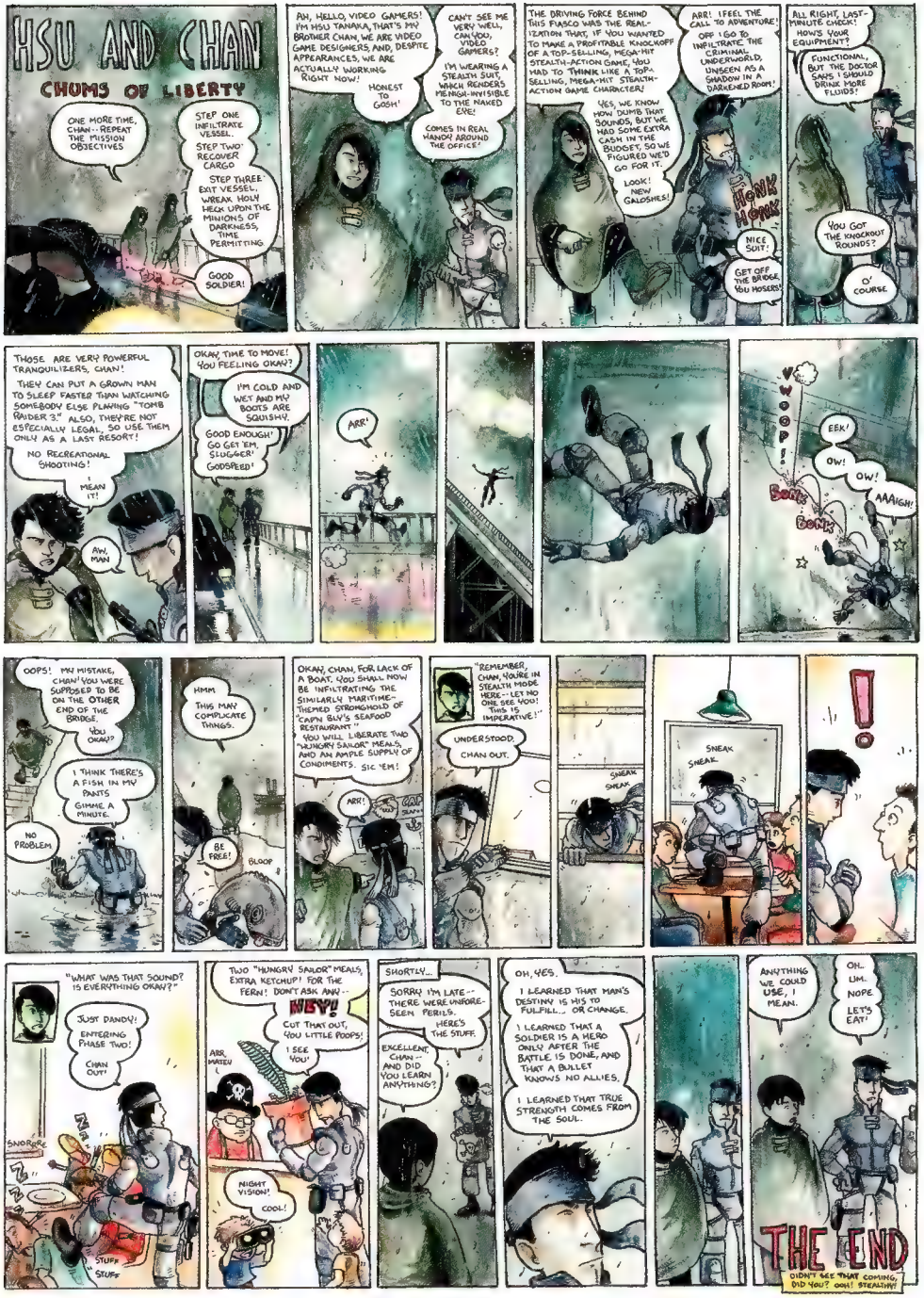
Multi-player combat with a tropical punch

As one of four primal male doofuses trying to win the heart of goddess Ooga Booga, you'll arm yourself with samurai heads, fireballs, tomatoes, traps and mines for a fun, fast and hilarious battle of survival. Summon meteor showers, grab a bird and launch an airborne attack or hop on a wild boar and mow down your foes. Offline or online, up to four players can put their survival instincts to the test in this ultimate greatest match mutation package.

EVERYONE E Violence ESRB

Dreamcast

SEGA


HSU AND CHAN
CHUMS OF LIBERTY
ONE MORE TIME, CHAN-- REPEAT THE MISSION OBJECTIVES
STEP ONE: INFILTRATE VESSEL.
STEP TWO: RECOVER CARGO
STEP THREE: EXIT VESSEL. WREAK HOLY HECK UPON THE MINIONS OF DARKNESS, TIME PERMITTING
GOOD SOLDIER!
AH, HELLO, VIDEO GAMERS! I'M HSU TANAKA, THAT'S MY BROTHER CHAN. WE ARE VIDEO GAME DESIGNERS, AND, DESPITE APPEARANCES, WE ARE ACTUALLY WORKING RIGHT NOW!
HONEST TO GOSH!
CAN'T SEE ME VERY WELL, CAN YOU, VIDEO GAMERS?
I'M WEARING A STEALTH SUIT, WHICH RENDERS ME HIGH-INVISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE!
COMES IN REAL HANDY AROUND THE OFFICE!
THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THIS FIASCO WAS THE REALIZATION THAT, IF YOU WANTED TO MAKE A PROFITABLE KNOCKOFF OF A TOP-SELLING, MEGA-HIT STEALTH-ACTION GAME, YOU HAD TO THINK LIKE A TOP-SELLING, MEGA-HIT STEALTH-ACTION GAME CHARACTER!
YES, WE KNOW HOW DUMB THAT SOUNDS, BUT WE HAD SOME EXTRA CASH IN THE BUDGET, SO WE FIGURED WE'D GO FOR IT.
LOOK! NEW GALOSHES!
ARR! I FEEL THE CALL TO ADVENTURE!
OFF I GO TO INFILTRATE THE CRIMINAL UNDERWORLD, UNSEEN AS A SHADOW IN A DARKENED ROOM!
HONK HONK
NICE SUIT!
GET OFF THE BRIDGE, YOU HOSERS!
ALL RIGHT, LAST-MINUTE CHECK! HOWS YOUR EQUIPMENT?
FUNCTIONAL, BUT THE DOCTOR SAYS I SHOULD DRINK MORE FLUIDS!
YOU GOT THE KNOCKOUT ROUNDS?
O' COURSE
THOSE ARE VERY POWERFUL TRANQUILIZERS, CHAN!
THEY CAN PUT A GROWN MAN TO SLEEP FASTER THAN WATCHING SOMEBODY ELSE PLAYING "TOMB RAIDER 3." ALSO, THEY'RE NOT ESPECIALLY LEGAL, SO USE THEM ONLY AS A LAST RESORT!
NO RECREATIONAL SHOOTING!
I MEAN IT!
AW, MAN
OKAY, TIME TO MOVE! YOU FEELING OKAY?
I'M COLD AND WET AND MY BOOTS ARE SQUISHY.
GOOD ENOUGH! GO GET 'EM, SLUGGER!
GODSPEED!
ARR!
VWOOP!
EEK!
OW!
OW!
AAAIGH!
BONK
BONK
OOPS! MY MISTAKE, CHAN! YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE ON THE OTHER END OF THE BRIDGE.
YOU OKAY?
I THINK THERE'S A FISH IN MY PANTS
GIMME A MINUTE.
NO PROBLEM
HMM. THIS MAN COMPLICATE THINGS.
BE FREE!
BLOOP
OKAY, CHAN. FOR LACK OF A BOAT, YOU SHALL NOW BE INFILTRATING THE SIMILARLY MARITIME-THEMED STRONGHOLD OF "CAPN' BILL'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT."
YOU WILL LIBERATE TWO "HUNGRY SAILOR" MEALS AND AN AMPLE SUPPLY OF CONDIMENTS. SIC 'EM!
ARR!
SLAM
"REMEMBER, CHAN, YOU'RE IN STEALTH MODE HERE-- LET NO ONE SEE YOU! THIS IS IMPERATIVE!"
UNDERSTOOD. CHAN OUT.
SNEAK
SNEAK
SNEAK.
!
"WHAT WAS THAT SOUND? IS EVERYTHING OKAY?"
JUST DANDY! ENTERING PHASE TWO! CHAN OUT.
SNORRRE
ZZZ
ZZZ
STUFF
STUFF
TWO "HUNGRY SAILOR" MEALS, EXTRA KETCHUP! FOR THE FERN! DON'T ASK ANY--
HEY!
CUT THAT OUT, YOU LITTLE POOPS! I SEE YOU!
ARR MATEY
NIGHT VISION!
COOL!
SHORTLY...
SORRY, I'M LATE-- THERE WERE UNFORESEEN PERILS.
HERE'S THE STUFF.
EXCELLENT, CHAN-- AND DID YOU LEARN ANYTHING?
OH, YES.
I LEARNED THAT MAN'S DESTINY IS HIS TO FULFILL... OR CHANGE.
I LEARNED THAT A SOLDIER IS A HERO ONLY AFTER THE BATTLE IS DONE, AND THAT A BULLET KNOWS NO ALLIES.
I LEARNED THAT TRUE STRENGTH COMES FROM THE SOUL.
ANYTHING WE COULD USE, I MEAN.
OH. UM. NOPE. LET'S EAT!
THE END
DIDN'T SEE THAT COMING, DID YOU? OOH! STEALTH!

MT. GARRICK, ONCE A PEACEFUL MOUNTAIN RETREAT. IN A STRANGE TURN OF EVENTS, THE SECRETIVE CHIEF O'LEARY HAS RECENTLY CLOSED IT OFF TO VISITORS.
WHAT'S GOING ON UP THERE?
NO BOARDING
DARK SUMMIT
IT'S NOT WHAT IT SEEMS.
www.darksummit.net
COMING THIS FALL...

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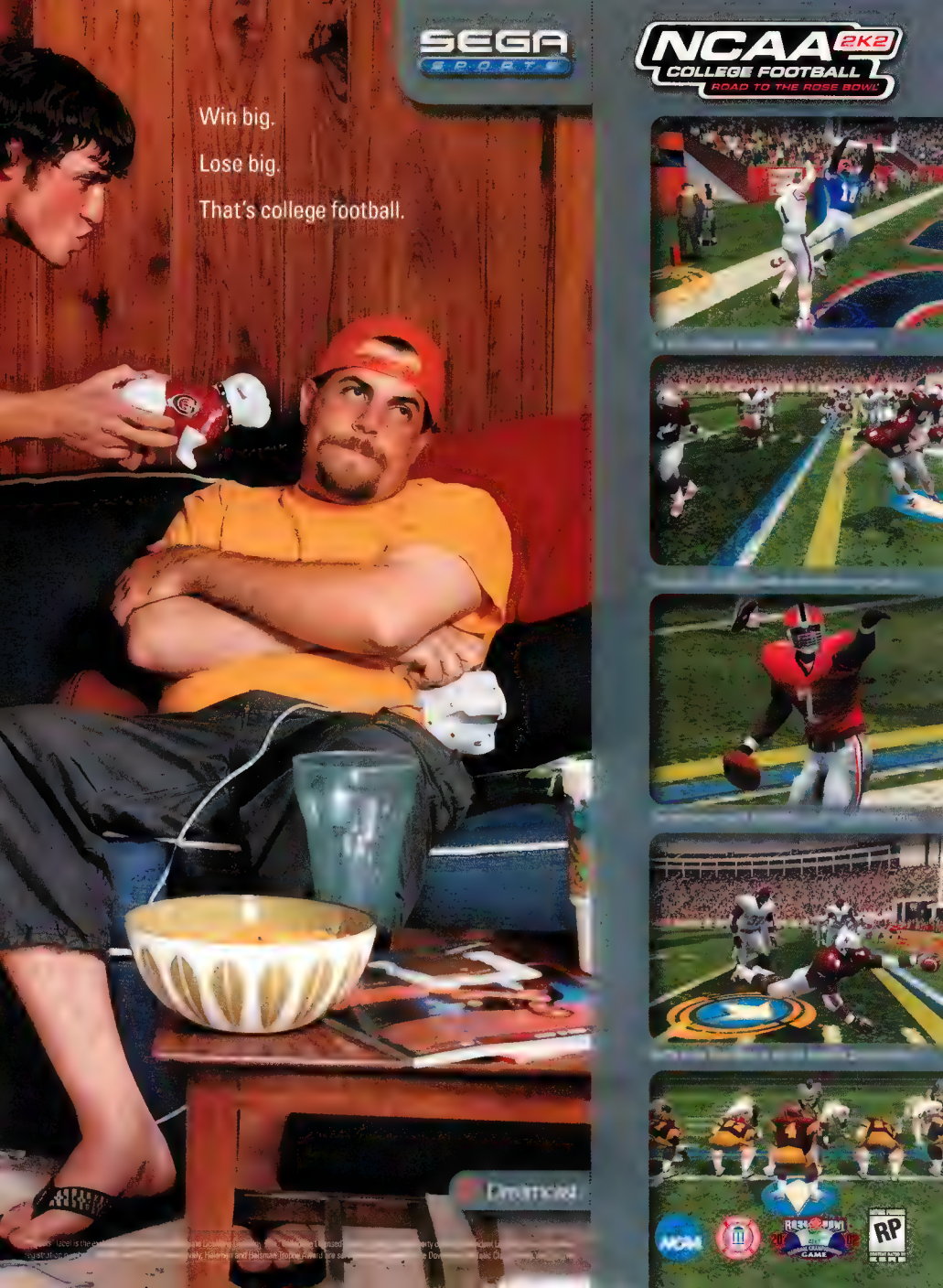
SEGA
SPORTS
Win big.
Lose big.
That's college football.
NCAA 2K2
COLLEGE FOOTBALL
ROAD TO THE ROSE BOWL

Previews

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This Month in Previews

WARNING: Previews marked with international symbols may or may not be released in the U.S. They are designed to run on Japanese or European PAL systems. Import at your own risk.

Seems like the only system with any real presence in Previews this month is the PlayStation 2. Every other console front is pretty quiet. Feels like the calm before the storm. The storm, of course, being the impending launch of both the GameCube and the Xbox.

We think you'll be hearing a lot about one game featured this month, both because of its incredible depth and its controversial content. Grand Theft Auto III contains some of the most graphic violence we've ever seen in a title, and we've seen 'em all.

We fear that politicians will add this title to their arsenal when attempting to blame video games for the moral corruption of our nation's youth. Nonetheless, the game is looking super-cool. Just wait 'til you play it!

And speaking of gory games, check out our latest info on Konami's thrilling Silent Hill 2. It seems like that old "M" rating will be getting quite a workout this holiday season. Hopefully all the gore and adult content is justified.

Otherwise everything we're showcasing this month is pretty squeaky-clean. We'll be dissecting a few of the new moves and combos you'll find in Tony Hawk 3 on the PS2. Plus, we take our first crack at Tony 3 on the old PS1.

Grand Theft Auto III is bound to turn a few heads for a variety of reasons–both good and bad. Check out what all the fuss is about starting on page 70.

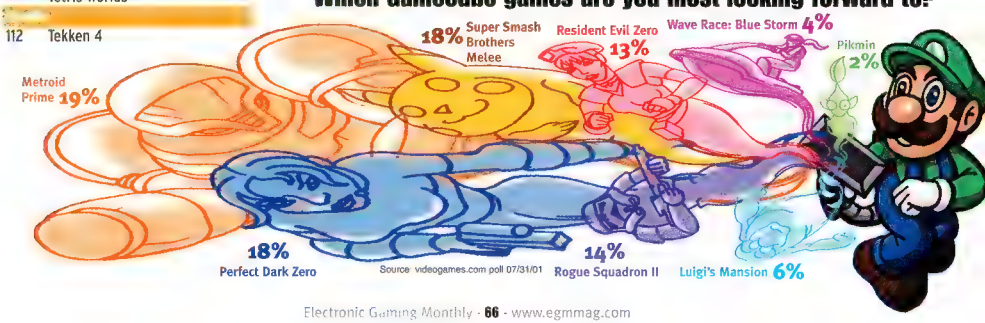
We also welcome back the arcade section after a four-month hiatus with some actual gameplay impressions of the highly anticipated Tekken 4. See what our editors think about this latest sequel on page 112.

Next month? Expect some more Dreamcast love as we dig into Yu Suzuki's Shenmue II, plus we'll bust open Sony's RPG Okage.

TOP 5 Preview Picks

1. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	PlayStation 2, November
2. Silent Hill 2	PlayStation 2, September
3. Grand Theft Auto III	PlayStation 2, October
4. Tekken 4	Arcade, Now
5. Dragon Warrior VII	PlayStation, November

Which GameCube games are you most looking forward to?



BE COOL
AND SUCK
AT THE
SAME TIME
Tang
Always Upbeat
Tang
Berry Panic
Tang
Tropical Trend
Tang
Fruit Frenzy
Tang
Cherry Craze

PS2

PREVIEW

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

Publisher:	Activision
Developer:	Neversoft
Players:	1-4
Genre:	Skateboarding
% Done:	50%
Release:	Fall 2001
Also On:	Xbox, GameCube, PS1
Web Address:	www.activision.com

The Good: THPS3 is deeper and better in every way than THPS2.

The Bad: Sony's online plan may not be ready in time for THPS3.

And The Ugly: Some of the new wipeouts are absolutely brutal.

Some of the bystanders in L.A. don't take kindly to skate punks like you. Stand around long enough and they'll kick your ass.

Our West Coast editor, Che Chou, tears up the new competition-based Tokyo level. Che wishes he was this sexy in real life.

LET'S GET IT ON

Hawk Online

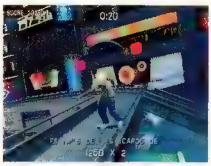
While Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 won't use Sony's upcoming PS2 hard drive, it will be online ready out of the package. So will the game be compatible with Sony's PS2 network? That depends on whether Sony can get the network up in time for the game's release. Rain or shine, Neversoft and Activision plan to support THPS3 for online play via any USB modem or broadband adapter. Once you're connected, up to three people can join you in a classic round of Trick Attack, Graffiti and others. Thanks to the improved create-a-skater mode, who knows what manner of freakshow you'll encounter online!

Certain skills in life, like swimming, riding a bike or playing Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, stay with you forever. This theory was put to the test when Activision showed up at our offices to demo Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 this month. After running through the game's long list of new features and racking up about a billion points in the process, Activision Associate Producer Stacey Drellishak turned to us and asked, "Wanna give it a try?" What, and make an ass of myself after your little dog and pony show there? No way! But sheepishly, I picked up the controller and put the new Tony through his paces.

Sure, I was wobbly at first. But then it hit me like it always does after a long break from this series. The simplistic control scheme, the addictive nature of the combo system—these were undeniable trademarks first introduced in THPS. Its sequel gave us, among other things, the manual, a trick that lets you tack on an almost infinite string of combos, provided you don't faceplant first. But as the third game in the golden franchise, how could THPS3 improve on seemingly perfect gameplay?

Neversoft took THPS' freestyle combo system and, once again, blew it wide open with the newly implemented "revert" trick. The what? The *revert*. Remember this word, kids, because like an MTV marketing mantra, you're going to see it over and over again. Very simply, reverts are a way of bringing a whole category of vert tricks into the combo system. Hit L2 right as you land from a vert trick and you'll perform what looks like a simple foot switch. But looks can deceive. Since the revert counts as a continuation of your combo, it's basically open season from there—vert into revert into manuals into grinds—into flips into grinds into manuals...you

OLD HAWK, NEW (FLATLAND) TRICKS



(Far left) In the Halloween-themed Suburbia level, a mysterious thin man is locked out of his house. Help him find his key, and he'll axe down the barriers to a hidden part of the stage. (Left) One of the goals in the new Canada level requires that you unstick *EGM*'s Previews Editor Greg Sewart from the icy pole.

get the idea. "You're going to triple your high score from Tony 2," Drellishak says. As a trick, reverts may not look like much, but it's the missing link that'll forever change the way you rack up the numbers in THPS.

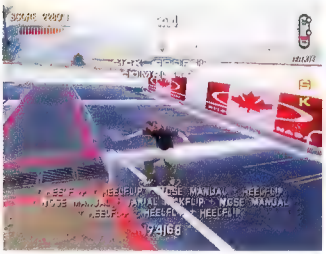
But THPS3 is about more than just reverts. To further loosen the free-form gameplay, Neversoft also threw in Rodney Mullen-inspired "flatland" techniques and a new trick-branching system. If you've ever seen a Mullen skate video where he's prancing in place with his deck, doing bunny hops and truckstands, then you know just how stylish and balletic these feats can be. "[Flatland tricks in the game] look incredible, but Rodney Mullen can pull this stuff off in real life," says Drellishak. "It's insane!" In THPS3, you can only perform such exploits (see sidebar) with a full special meter on a flat surface. Like manuals or kickflips, flatland tricks can be combo'ed into and out of for extra flair.

Unlike manuals and kickflips, however, flatland moves can also branch into each other, without you needing to ollie first. To flow from trick to trick, just jab directions on the D-pad and punch the button during your current move. Voilá, you're the man. Heck, you can even buffer in a flatland maneuver during your ollie or kickflip.

"You're going to triple your high score from Tony 2."

—Tracy Drellishak, associate producer at Activision

And finally, you can now branch both grinds and lip tricks. Imagine, strutting your stuff on a lip grind, shifting between the different slides, and then dropping into the bowl for another vert run, all without a single ollie! There's a lot to digest here, but this is kick-ass news for Hawkheads everywhere. THPS3 also has a ton of stuff to discover, both in terms of hidden and special moves. Drellishak admits, "You can get through the game with just the revert and manual, but the more you experiment with button combos, the more special tricks you'll find." —*Che Chou*



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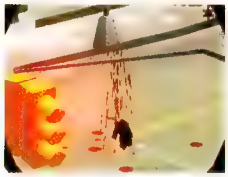
Grand Theft Auto III

Publisher: Rockstar
Developer: DMA Design
Players: 1
Genre: Gangster simulator
% Done: 70%
Release: October 2001
Web Address: rockstargames.com
www.grandtheftauto3.com
The Good: Surprisingly deep gameplay and story.
The Bad: The main character's moral fiber.
And The Ugly: Parents' groups when they get a hold of this game.



All right, this is gratuitous. You'll notice a lot of red spots on the streets of Liberty City. Especially after you've grabbed the sniper rifle.

Use this guy's head as a baseball and then steal his ride. Run over him a few times for good measure.

Controversy. That's the first word that came to mind when Rockstar stopped by to show us the latest build of Grand Theft Auto III. One look at all the screenshots on these pages and it's not hard to see why. These guys must be counting on the public's morbid curiosity of all things violent to send sales of their game into the stratosphere.

But maybe our reaction is just a result of all the press surrounding video game violence lately. Or maybe it's because, no matter how enlightened we like to believe we are, somewhere in the back of our minds we still consider games to be toys. We're forgetting the average PS2 owner is in his early 20s.

It's a fact not lost on Rockstar, however. "There will always be kid's games," Creative Director Dan Houser points out, "but there should be games for an older audience as well. Games that are more adult-themed and well-styled will help people see video games for what they are becoming: a commercial art form in their own right." Fair enough. And to be honest, the more we play it, the more we realize just how well-styled this game really is.

The missions you take on are anything but ordinary. You're not just sent out to jack one car after the next, but rather to be a grunt in a local gangster's army. Your job is to do everything from beat down opposing crooks and pimps to assassinating rival crime bosses. Just another day at the office, eh?

Although the main objective is to take on one mission after another, you can do so much more with your time. Walk the streets and pick the pockets of nearby citizens, or just beat the crap outta them with your baseball bat. You can even take part in a street race once you've got enough street cred. Pedestrians scold you for nearly hitting them, hookers ask if you're looking for some action, and you can even ride the "L" train if you want. If you're particularly evil you could climb to the top of any number of buildings and pick off random people with your sniper rifle. Of course, there's always some good old-fashioned joy-riding to do, too. Liberty City is truly alive.

But couldn't they tone down the blood and gore just a little? Well...no. Once you sanitize a game like

"I'm not in the business of selling games to 10-year-olds. I categorically admit I'm s--- at it."
—Terry Donovan, COO of Rockstar

HONEST LIVIN'

Crazy Taxi

Tired of a life of crime? The Man keepin' you down? No problem, just steal a cab and start delivering fares.

Try to think Crazy Taxi here, except you can run over any pedestrians who get in your way. The fares are ridiculous, too. You'll often make thousands of bucks for a few minutes' work. At those rates, who needs to steal for a living?

Or if you really want to go the straight and narrow, steal a cop car. While in the car you can take on various police missions. Teach lowlife scum a lesson they won't soon forget by pumping them full of lead or just plain running over them. Kinda makes you wonder if Liberty City is out on the West Coast somewhere, doesn't it?

MAMA TOLD YOU CRIME DOESN'T PAY

Al Capone
The original Public Enemy #1. Convicted of tax evasion in 1931. Died of syphilis in 1947.

John Dillinger
Bank robber who escaped from "escape-proof" Crown Point Prison. Killed in 1934 by law enforcement.

Sam Giancana
Linked to deaths of JFK, RFK and Marilyn Monroe. Murdered in his Oak Park, Ill. home in 1975.

Rolling your car is a good way to drop its resale value, not to mention get yourself dead. If you see any flames from the engine area (middle image), get the hell out of there. Otherwise, you're barbeque.

GTA3 you lose that dark, serious mood inspired by such films as *Goodfellas* and *Scarface*. "The average age of a PlayStation 2 owner is 24 now. You're dealing with adult people who get spoken to by fashion and film companies," explains Terry Donovan, chief operating officer of Rockstar, "I'm not in the business of selling games to 10-year-olds. I categorically admit I'm s--- at it. I don't know how to communicate with a 10-year-old."

The real worry is whether the graphic content will overshadow what's shaping up to be a great game underneath. Grand Theft Auto III could be most hotly debated game since Doom, Night Trap and Mortal Kombat. One thing's for certain; one way or another people will be talking about this game for a long time to come. *–Greg Sewart*

Pining for the GTA of old? No worries. Tap the select button and voilá! The classic overhead view from the first two games!

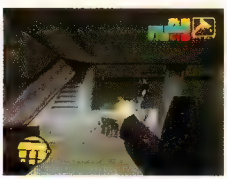
24 HOURS IN LIBERTY CITY

So after me and 8-Ball broke outta the joint he said he had a place where we could lay low for a while. You know, until the heat died down. Then the minute we get there, this greaseball Luigi orders me to go pick up one of his girls from the clinic. Like I'm his $@&in' whore's chauffeur! But you don't say no to a man like Luigi.

'Course, the minute I get back Luigi's bitchin' about some pusher sellin' spank to his girls down at Portland Docks. He tells me to go down there, kick the s--- outta this loser, and steal his car as compensation. You know these guys... always the freakin' dollars. Of course I do it; I been lookin' to get connected for years now. Plus Luigi introduced me to Don Leone's son, Joey, who needs a reliable enforcer like me.

But first he says I gotta prove my loyalty by singin' some fat bastard a lullaby. He's eatin' lunch up at Marco's Bistro. I gotta get his car down to Eightball's Auto Yard, get the explosives installed, and return it before he's finished the main course. I hope there ain't no alarm on that ride; there are pigs all over that part of town.

—a day in the life of GTA3's main character



Paul Castellano
Head of Gambino crime family. Murdered outside Sparks Steak House in New York City in 1985.

John Gotti
The Teflon Don. Sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole on racketeering charges in 1992.

Henry Hill
In Witness Protection Program. Life story basis for the movie *Goodfellas*. OK, maybe crime pays.

MORAL OUTRAGE

Return Fire

Photo by Katrina Genovese

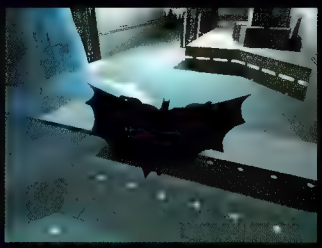
In a recent interview with our sister mag, *OPM*, Rockstar's COO Terry Donovan mused about politicians' motives when admonishing video games:

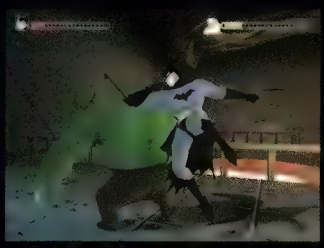
"Who is the person most vocal every time there's violence in a game? Is it a parent, a teacher, the gaming press, a morally concerned member of the games industry? No, it's a politician. Why are they involved? One of the last tools available for them to win votes is moral outrage.

"It doesn't piss me off. Politics is politics. It is what it is. When a politician says something, it doesn't make me sit and consider my inner soul or whether or not I'm darkening someone's future. I sincerely believe they care more about their political career than they do the protection of American children.

"You go back 20 years and Judas Priest were the outlaws. In 20 years there will be another vote-winner and they've just got to find them."

Couldn't have said it better ourselves. Nonetheless, we have a sinking feeling that Grand Theft Auto III will take a place beside titles like Doom, Night Trap and Mortal Kombat the next time some congressman decides to attack our industry. Who knows? Maybe Rockstar's counting on all the extra publicity it'll get them.





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Silent Hill 2

Publisher:	Konami
Developer:	Konami CET
Players:	1
Genre:	Horror adventure
% Done:	75%
Release:	September 2001
Web Address:	www.konami.com
Forecast:	Mostly foggy.
The Good:	Might just be the scariest game ever made.
The Bad:	The controls haven't changed much from the first SH.
And The Ugly:	Ugly? This game gives new meaning to the word "ugly."

SH2 is the first survival-horror game where you get to play as a pastey white zombie.

Since ammo is sparse throughout the game, you'll find yourself using your ugly stick a lot to beat down the uglies.

PERFECTLY DARK

The Shining

A huge part of what defined the first Silent Hill was its use of fog and darkness to convey uncertainty. It's no secret that on the PS1, these techniques were necessary due to hardware limitations. Looks like the developers stumbled upon a good thing, because Silent Hill 2 has brought back both of these effects in a big way.

Whereas the fog for SH was basically just a grey background that streamed landscapes and buildings as you walked, the fog in SH2 is 3D and looks completely realistic. Likewise, your flashlight has been souped up to throw real-time shadows on any object it illuminates. If you thought Castlevania GBA was too dark, wait 'til you play SH2.

Have you ever played a video game with subject matter so terrifying, atmosphere so claustrophobic, you actually had to pull the plug and look away? Chances are, it didn't happen with Resident Evil and its legion of zombies straight out of Michael Jackson's "Thriller" video. Chances are, the last game that's even remotely come close to inducing a bowel movement was Konami's landmark title, Silent Hill. Yeah, the game had its share of quirks, like sluggish controls and a storyline so metaphysical, entire FAQs have been devoted to its mystery. But the truth is, nothing that's come out since SH has so effectively tapped into our primal fears. When we finally got our hands on the sequel, I was eager to know if Silent Hill 2 could accomplish what contemporary horror movies can no longer do: scare the living crap out of me.

The game starts not with a bang, but with the quiet reflection of your alter-ego, everyman James Sanderland, in the mirror of a public restroom just outside Silent Hill. He runs a helpless hand over his face and tilts his head back to exhale a sigh. None of this makes any sense to him, nor you. In his pocket is a letter from James' dead wife, dated post-mortem, all bittersweet nostalgia and vicious guilt trips. Apparently, he made a promise to take her back to Silent Hill—but he never did. Now she's waiting for him, in their special place. Creepy? Wait until you actually set foot in town.

When you do, the first thing that greets you is fog—rolls and volumes of it seeping throughout Silent Hill. Thanks to the boost in power from the PlayStation 2, this returning effect looks more convincing than ever: Cotton-candy clouds so heavy you actually feel like you're pushing through a sea of spiderwebs; fog so thick you can barely make out the contours of a car parked across the street or the approaching silhouette of a lumbering mutant; precipitation so dense and chilling you'd think it was summer in San Francisco. Out on the streets of Silent Hill, all my phobias kicked in at once.

If the fog and the limited depth of view is any indicator that SH2 takes much after its predecessor, well, it does. Familiar items such as the semi-automatic pistol, chest-mounted flashlight and static radio all make a return to the sequel, with minor improvements of course. For instance, the radio static that warns of imminent danger is now a subtle wave of white noise that gradually washes over the foreground. Likewise, your flashlight can now be aimed to expose those dark hard-to-reach corners. You also have the option of resetting the camera to an over-the-shoulder view by pressing L2 at any time. Look beyond these

There's something stuck inside the toilet. Your first instinct? Roll up those sleeves and prepare to get wet, what else?

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How do the graphics in Silent Hill 2 stack up against some of the most grimey things in the world? =10%

Soaking-wet bathtub drain stopper filled with hair and other stuff

A backed-up porta-potty at a weekend-long rave

Silent Hill 2

minor tweaks, however, and you'll find that SH2 plays a lot like the first game. What's more, it continues to feel like an extension of Resident Evil, with its cumbersome rotate-and-walk gameplay, hold-the-button-and-run technique and the 180-degree quick snap-around move. What's new is that strafing and side-stepping is now much faster than the ridiculous baby steps you took in the first SH. In terms of gameplay, there's nothing here any survival-horror junkie hasn't already seen before. But this is where similarities between RE and SH end. What makes SH2 unique is how the game preys on your sense of sight, sound and even touch (with the Dual Shock) to generate fear; how it masterfully combines these elements to give the player a psychological spanking.

Beyond sight and sound, the thing that unnerves me the most about SH2, however, is its potentiality. More often than not, the game's sinister ambience is just a hollow threat. But that sense of tension, the implied threat, the feeling that at any moment, things will go from bad to worse, and that some time soon, the game will suddenly intensify its depravity, makes this an excursion into our own heart of darkness. Take the perilous journey at your own risk.

Too dark and inaccessible for the casual Blockbuster gamer? Probably. SH2's unrepentant swagger and Mature rating will no doubt alienate wary parents and frighten off the young, but its uncompromising stance to deliver the most twisted adventure yet is great news for horror-game fans.

—Che Chou

The Horrors of Italy

Is SH2 horrifying to play? You bet your *Fangoria* subscription it is. While SH2 is heavily influenced by contemporary Hollywood horror, it also draws inspiration from classic Italian *gialli* cinema of the 1960s and '70s. The *gialli* flick, as defined by seminal directors like Dario Argento, Lucio Fulci and Mario Bava, is a sub-genre of horror defined by its stylized mixture of sexploitation, gore and ambience, the likes of which Hollywood rarely sees. In fact, when we asked SH2's producer, Akihiro Imamura, what was the scariest movie he's ever seen, he retorted that it was easily Argento's masterpiece of gothic horror, *Suspiria* (1976). If you're a movie lover with a masochistic streak, you owe yourself a weekend binge of Italian horror.

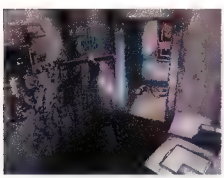
Story Time

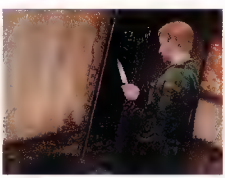
Silent Soaps

Even if you've finished the first Silent Hill, you probably still have a ton of unanswered questions about its incredibly convoluted, *Rosemary's Baby*-inspired storyline. Well, for all those who chickened out from Silent Hill, not to worry—the sequel isn't directly related to the first game, except that they both take place in a small midwestern town called Silent Hill.

While the first game dealt with evil cults, drugs and a demon named Samael, the sequel tells a tale of mistaken identities. James Sanderland, shattered over the death of his wife Mary, travels back to Silent Hill after receiving a mysterious letter from someone claiming to be Mary. It goes without saying that something's hit the proverbial fan, as the town is completely deserted and crawling with mutants. It is there that he meets Maria, a woman with an uncanny similarity to his Mary. To compound the mystery, Maria even knows details about private moments between James and his wife.

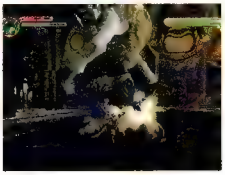
We won't spoil too much more here, but you can be certain Silent Hill 2's story will be just as deep and metaphysical as its predecessor. In the meantime, we recommend you check out Hitchcock's classic movie of mistaken identities, *Vertigo*.





Maximo: Ghosts to Glory

Publisher:	Capcom
Developer:	Capcom Digital Studios
Players:	1
Genre:	Action
% Done:	30%
Release:	January 2002
Revenge is:	A dish best served cold.
Web Address:	www.capcom.com
The Good:	Solid, old-school gameplay, striking visuals.
The Bad:	Achille is a bad mans.
And The Ugly:	Maximo's heart-covered boxer shorts. Fortunately you can buy a different banana-sack.



You'll know you've reached the end of level one when you see this Frankenbeast storm you way. Hint: aim for his toes.

Ahh, the cemetery at night. So peaceful, so...where'd those skeletons come from? Oh god! I'M NAKED!

DEATH BECOMES YOU

Big Ol' Boner

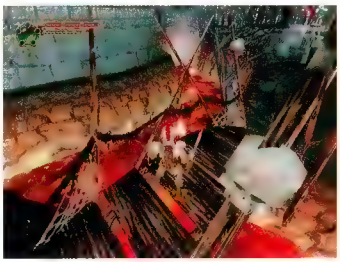
As with everything in the game, even "continues" subscribe to a certain, baffling logic. Nifty! Since Maximo was sent to meet Death firsthand (thanks to Achille's backstabbing treachery), he took the opportunity to strike a deal with His Royal Darkness. It seems Death isn't too pleased with having the souls of the dead uprooted by Achille's black magic, and suggests Maximo reclaim them in exchange for a reprieve from the long dirt nap. So, for every 50 souls Maximo collects from various tombstones littered around the game, he staves off the icy mitt of Death once more and continues on his merry way. But come up short at the soul register and it's cement shoes for you.

Let's face it. Aside from a few notable exceptions (and you know who you are), Western software developers, in direct contrast to their Japanese counterparts, pale when it comes to producing the same level of high-quality software. It's this factor that makes Maximo scream like a bolt out of the blue, prompting most anyone who picks up the controller and gives it a spin to say, "Wow!" Created using only the freshest ingredients, and not a borrowed technology or game-engine, Maximo is being brought to life by the newly formed Capcom Digital Studios, which is composed of a select team of industry veterans like David Siller (Crash Bandicoot), Mark Rogers (Mission: Impossible) and William Anderson (Abe's Oddysee). Those years of combined experience show in Maximo from the instant you fire up the game.

Inspired by the Ghosts 'N Goblins series, CDS set out to create the perfect next-Gen G'NG homage. Siller says, "We wanted to invent an all-new 'King rescues the Queen from the creepy monster' game, and then decided to add those clever tributes from (Capcom's) library of classic games!"

The story centers around the title character (designed by renowned illustrator Susumu Matsushita), a gladiator returning home from war only to find himself ensnared in a trap. Incredibly, Maximo's most trusted advisor, Achille, has taken not only his kingdom, but swiped Maximo's woman as well! Rather than the usual James Bond trap/escape situation, Achille simply disposes of Maximo using that ol' black magic and sends our hero on a one-way trip to Hades. As it happens, Death is in a generous mood, and decides to give Maximo another shot at Achille and a chance to set things right. It seems Achille has been raising the dead, and that pisses Death off.

By embracing that G'NG legacy, Capcom has forged a run, jump and slash platformer that impresses. The camera is superb, allowing Maximo to jump, double-jump, double-jump sword slam, crouch, shield-block, and shield-throw virtually frustration-free. In addition to the nonstop combat, there is also peripheral treasure hunting and collecting to be done (see sidebars). Unlike the typical fetch quest that has you gathering items for gathering's sake, the hundreds of gold coins Maximo collects buy him upgrades, whether it be additional armor, death coins or clean underwear for that matter. The dev team has gone to great lengths to make you feel rewarded for your efforts, and every item you purchase or pick up is reflected on Maximo's in-game polygonal model.



Just like Arthur did in Ghosts 'N Goblins, so too does Maximo go from full armor to heart-laced boxers when he suffers enough damage.

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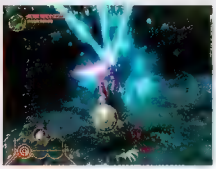
MERIT BADGES OF THE DEAD

Each time Maximo gains a power-up badge, it goes into his "belt," which keeps track of his acquisitions. There are over 40 power-ups to be found in the game, and as many as you find, you can carry simultaneously on that belt. But if you get killed you'll lose all but three of them. Why? Because you can "lock" any three power-ups "permanently" to your belt, so even if you get your sorry ass killed, your favorite three will still be there when you respawn at the last checkpoint. The Shield of Midas, for example, may be your favorite because it keeps you out of dangerous places while sucking up coins. Experiment, baby, it's the only way!



If you buy a new shield, he'll strap it to his arm. If you pick up a key, he'll wear it on his hip, etc. In fact, the graphics on a whole stand up there with the likes of MGS2 or Devil May Cry. Hi-res, fast-moving, and lush in color, detail and design, Maximo's world is a truly spooky place. It's like having a frat party (with a soundtrack supplied by Tommy Tallarico, the Danny Elfman of the video game world) in a graveyard on Halloween, except that this is a party frequently interrupted by Achille's army of darkness.

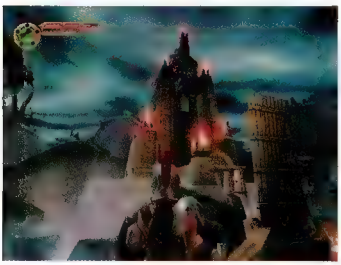
Producer Mark Rogers even notes that Maximo's "Creepy Cam" (the term CDS uses to describe the tilted camera angles in the game) was inspired by Sam Raimi's *Army of Darkness*. Combined with the spooks in the game, the whole aesthetic feels remarkably complete.

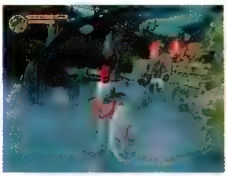
Speaking of spooks, the enemies in Maximo are classic Ghosts 'N Goblins, with skeletons of increasing aggressiveness and skill erupting from the ground at almost every step. If that wasn't bad enough, there are especially nasty goons that can transform Maximo into an "Old Man Maximo" or a "Baby Maximo" leaving him vulnerable for a short duration. Basically, as with the Ghosts 'N Goblins games, Maximo is a stiff challenge, and finding each section's considerable cache of secrets is something not easily achieved. Simply beating the levels is one thing; mastering them is something completely different.

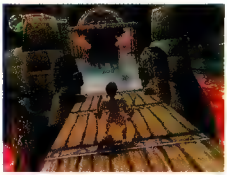
Depending on how much of the game you complete (as indicated by the end-of-level stats chart), you will receive different endings based on your performance. Since the game features five expansive levels (each with multiple areas), over which Maximo must rescue four princesses and eventually, his lost love, finding 100 percent of the game's secrets is going to take serious effort.

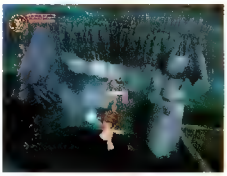
While the game is still at a relatively early level of completion, Capcom has no doubts that CDS will have the game ready for January 2002. Want maximum Maximo? Check www.egmmag.com for further coverage of the next evolution in Ghosts 'N Goblins.

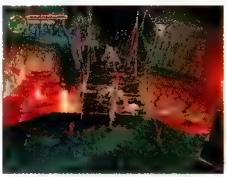
—James Mielke

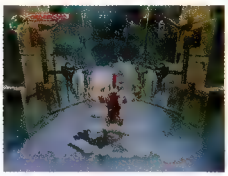


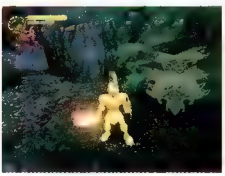


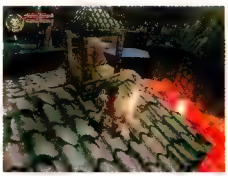












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PS2

PREVIEW

Batman Vengeance

Publisher:	Ubi Soft
Developer:	Ubi Soft
Players:	1
Genre:	Action/Adventure
% Done:	50%
Release:	Winter 2001
Also On:	Xbox
Web Address:	www.ubisoft.com
The Good:	Captures the spirit of DC's coolest comic-book character.
The Bad:	Jumping is a bit awkward at times.
And The Ugly:	Watching Batman repeatedly fall off of skyscrapers.

Never accept an invitation to a barbeque if the Joker is hosting it...

Hand-to-hand goon battles will remind you of the action sequences in Neversoft's Spider-Man games– punch, punch, block, uppercut.

THE MANY FACES

Will the real Batman please stand up?

1. Adam West defined Batman for TV audiences. 2. Frank Miller reinvented him for comic-book fans, and 3. Michael Keaton re-jump-started the character's contemporary popularity. In like form, Ubi Soft's new game sets the standard for future Batman video games.

The Dark Knight has had a rough ride in the world of electronic entertainment. Over the past decade there have been dozens of Batman games, but barring the two original titles on the old Nintendo and the Genesis, most have been pretty awful. Atari, Konami, Sega and Acclaim have all managed to produce lackluster games that never did this great franchise justice.

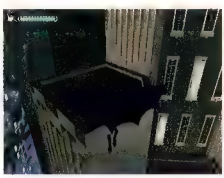
Enter Ubi Soft. After having farmed out their recently acquired Batman license to external programming teams for a couple of average-to-poor N64 and PS1 games (Batman Beyond, Gotham City Racer), the house that Rayman built is putting the finishing touches on their first internally developed game featuring the winged vigilante.

The progress they've made looks good so far. These guys know action platformers, and their expertise shows in this exciting, visually cool 3D adventure. When playing, you ARE Batman—gliding through the air, firing off Batarangs, and grappling from building to building is a total rush. Covertly sneaking around the city Solid Snake-style is perfectly in sync with the character's combat methodology, as is "cuffing" every enemy you knock unconscious. Remember how well Neversoft and Activision captured the essence of Spider-Man last year? Ubi Soft looks like they might be able to pull off the same feat here. These designers are definitely Bat-fans; they understand the fundamental nature of the character.

Better still, the team has gone the distance to ensure that the game retains the look and feel of the animated television series. The show's voice actors have been brought on board to record the game's dialogue, and the program's writers have been tapped, too. This creative group has broken the structure of the game into an anthology form, so every level plays as a totally distinct "episode." Just as you think you've saved the day by taking the Joker back to Arkham Asylum, you'll be enlisted to star in a new tale, where another of the fiends from Batman's rogue gallery is wreaking havoc in Gotham City.

If you're the kind of reader who wears Batman ties or boxers, we've found your favorite PS2 game.

—Ethan Einhorn



TAKE FIGHTING TO NEW HEIGHTS

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Perform signature mutant moves–even stunning aerial combat–in 10 of the original arenas, plus 6 new locations.

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X-MEN 2
MUTANT ACADEMY

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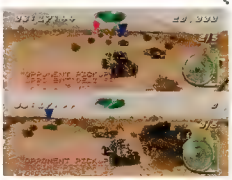
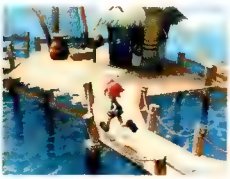
Smuggler's Run 2



Angel Studios is working to make Smuggler's Run 2 a more wild experience than the original. Is that cop getting too close for comfort? Then drop an explosive canister on his ass. Or maybe you're running neck and neck with the dorky ATV guy (don't laugh, he's in the game). Simply hit the turbo and leave him in the dust. A handy radar navigation screen will help guide your way. In addition to those helpful features, a new Bomb Tag mini-game will keep you entertained for days—it's that good. Because the original was a tad bit frustrating, the difficulty's been toned down a bit as well. **Rockstar Games** plans to release SR2 this **November.**

Okage: Shadow King

Known in Japan as the equally strange-titled Boku to Maoh (literally "Me and Satan King"), **Sony**'s Okage is a traditional RPG about a boy who calls upon a powerful spirit to help find a cure for his sister, who has been cursed. Instead, he conjures up Stan, a wisecracking, wimpy devil who occupies the boy's shadow. Stan agrees to cure the sister if the boy helps him regain his evil power. The graphics are surreal and beautiful, with quirky character designs reminiscent of those in *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. The import features lighthearted, funny dialogue, which will hopefully stay intact in the U.S. release; we'll find out in **October**.



Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder

We're not sure what the deal is with Shaun's freaky Cadillac fetish (*EGM* #146), but his game is shaping up nicely. Playing more like Cool Boarders 2001 than SSX, Pro Snowboarding (even in its current state) handles like butter. The Tony Hawk control scheme is like an old, familiar friend. Linking tricks is surprisingly comfortable, thanks to forgiving physics and a softer balance meter. Look for SPPS this **October.**

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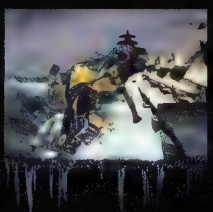
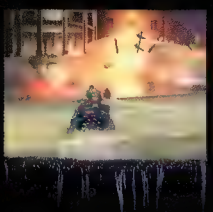


Hyper-realistic racing velocity and major air give new meaning to breakneck speed.



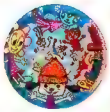
Make 'em feel you with combat weapons like snow bombs, missiles, and The Atomic Snowball.

Sneak Preview @ www.arcticthunder.midway.com

ARCTIC THUNDER

PlayStation.2

T
Mild Violence



THE MAN BEHIND "PARAPPA"

Rodney Alan Greenblat, the designer of the worlds and characters presented in the PaRappa games, is one of the most respected graphic artists in America. For a peek at his gallery work, drop by the following Web site: http://www.whimseyload.com.

NHL Hitz

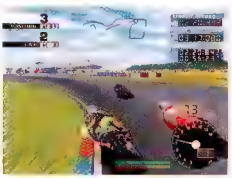
Just because developer **Black Box** is known for the more sim-like NHL 2K doesn't mean they can't poke fun at the sport. Hitz glorifies everything that's exciting (and fun) about hockey: intense speed, crushing body checks and fisticuffs.

Like the other "z" titles in **Midway**'s stable, Hitz features a paired-down squad (4-on-4), the ability to catch on fire, and a break-neck game pace. The physics and control are mighty competent as well. To top it off, the darn thing looks fantastic. Check out NHL Hitz this **September**.

MotoGP 2

Superbike racing doesn't get a whole lot of love from the video game world, but **Namco** won't let that stop them from releasing a sequel to one of the better PS2 racers thus far.

Look for this baby to sport all the upgrades you'd expect: more tracks, more setup options and a complete 2001 roster of riders and bikes. No word on whether Klonoa will make an appearance again. (You DID unlock him in the last game, right?) Namco hasn't announced a U.S. release yet.



Victorious Boxers

Ever punch a grizzly bear square in the face and live to tell the story? In Victorious Boxers, coming in **October** from **Empire Interactive**, you will. Based on a popular Japanese comic, the game follows Ippo as he realizes his dreams of becoming a champion prizefighter. You don't get stamina bars or a clock, nor do you have to tap buttons to get up when you get knocked down—gameplay is all based on fighting technique.

PaRappa the Rapper 2

In PaRappa's first PS2 adventure, he joins forces with his friends (including the cast of UmJammer Lammy) to battle a new enemy—The Noodle Group. First he's got to brush up on his rhyme-busting skills with the help of some new teachers. Aside from the polished graphics and interface, now you get a practice round before each master's challenge. **Sony CEI** will release PaRappa 2 in Japan on **Aug. 30**; a U.S. release is **TBA**.

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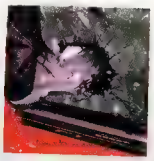

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Jeremy Jones casually tweaks a switch 1440 stalefish over a 70 foot+ cliff band.

Amateur rider Trent covers huge distance with this late 180 tail grab in Canada.

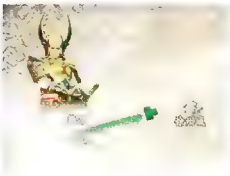
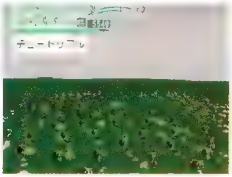
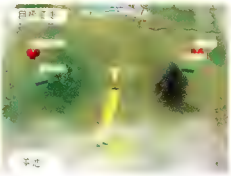
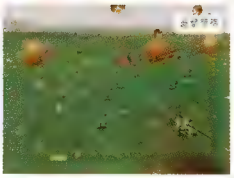
Blinding speeds and endless combinations are Tara Dakides key to boardercross.

Todd Richards sets up style points with this inverted backside 540 in the new Half Pipe.

Kevin Jones grabbing stalefish over powder transitions.

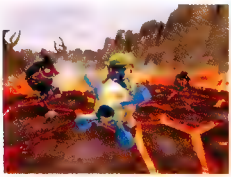
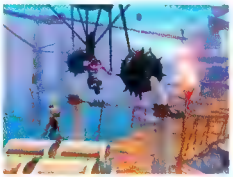
Kessen II

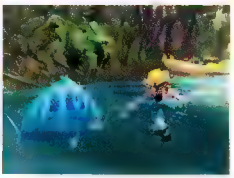
Koei is coming back for seconds this **fall**. Kessen II offers up most of the same gameplay, but features more fantasy-based elements, including fierce elemental magic attacks such as lightning storms and tornados. A major change from the first Kessen is that the story now takes place during the Romance of the Three Kingdoms period, detailing the conflict between historic generals Liu Bei and Cao Cao.

Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy

The guys at Naughty Dog are hardcore programmers and it shows. The game throws around some of the most beautiful, hi-res habitats and lighting effects yet seen on the PS2. Truly a next-gen action-platformer, J and D has you adventuring in some rather innovative ways. And while the beefed-up Crash-like gameplay revolves around Jak and his ferret-like pal Daxter, the rodent isn't actually playable; he provides a comic foil to his buddy's stoic facade. Adding to the game's balanced diet is 50 minutes of Disney-caliber animation, an excellent camera system, loads of special effects and multiple endings. **SCEA** ships J and D this **December**.



Capcom vs. SNK 2

PS2 owners who crave 2D fighting action are going to have a good month in **October**, when **Capcom** releases Capcom vs. SNK 2. This sequel adds more than 10 new characters (Dan, Joe Higashi, Haohmaru, Athena, Kyosuke, etc.) to the returning cast and increases the amount of grooves (fighting techniques) from two to six. The game also features hi-res 3D backgrounds similar to those in Marvel vs. Capcom 2.

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PlayStation®2

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MONKEYING AROUND

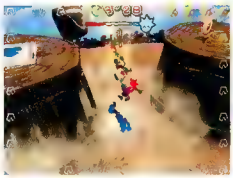
Hey, Ape Escape fans—can't get enough of your favorite primates? Check out the "Everybody Loves Monkeys" Web site (http://themonkeys.8m.com/). It's the best place on the Web to find monkey-related pictures, stories and news.

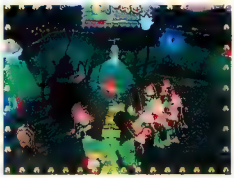
Kingdom Hearts

Did you know Disney's using this RPG to launch a new franchise? That's one of the reasons they're letting **Square** use the official Disney voice actors for Donald and Goofy (in Japan). Those classic characters team up with the two main, Square-designed protagonists to travel through various worlds and fight a bunch of old and new Disney villains. A release date hasn't been announced, but expect it around **mid-2002**.

Piposaru 2001

The plot in this Ape Escape sequel is just like *Planet of the Apes*: A lone hero wanders a harsh future world populated with monkeys, using a giant vacuum cleaner to suck off their pants, so they can finally be laundered. OK, maybe it's a bit different than the movie, but they *do* both have monkeys. And pants. A simpler game than the original, P2001 is still enough fun that we hope **Sony** brings it to the U.S. soon.





Guilty Gear X

If the title threw you off, GGX is **Sammy**'s glitzy new 2D fighter, and it's one pretty piece of work. Developed by **Arc System Works**, GGX sports anime-style arenas and 16 fighters with some of the most beautiful and impractical moves you'll ever see (an anchor is one fighter's weapon of choice). *EGM* contributor John Ricciardi is working hard on the English translation for the **fall** release, so it's bound to be good!

PlayStation 2

PicturePerfect lets you put your digital image into the game

LOOKING TO PICK A FIGHT?

Monster Rancher 3 is back with a vengeance! Endure many hard weeks of training, transforming your monster into a fine-tuned fighting machine. Then enter your personal gladiators in tournaments, where they battle tooth and claw for supremacy against monsters of rival breeders, or your friends! With its completely immersive breeding system, the ability to generate original monsters from DVD's, CD's and other video games, and the revolutionary new PicturePerfect technology, Monster Rancher 3 puts YOU into the game!

Monster Rancher 3

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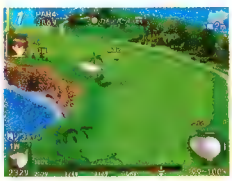
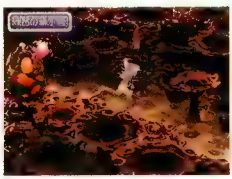
Hot Shots Golf 3

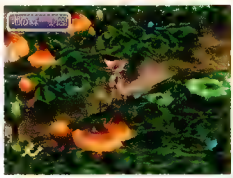
The PS1's premier golf series is headed to PS2 this October from **Sony** and developer **Clap Hanz**. Just released in Japan, Hot Shots Golf 3 features the same "real physics, silly characters" play style that graced the first two titles, but with a much prettier graphics engine and a host of new modes, options, characters and mini-games. There's a new Item Shop for purchasing gear, caddies and other extras, and there's even a new password-based Internet Ranking feature for posting your scores to the Net. Best of all, pressure-sensitive control is supported (it's all about precision, baby!). No word yet on U.S. release.



Jade Cocoon II

The sequel to Genki's PS1 monster-breeding RPG is headed to PS2. **Ubi Soft** is handling the localization duties this time. Jade Cocoon II takes place 100 years after the first game and features a similar graphical style, though now the game world is entirely 3D (the original used prerendered backgrounds). The battle system of the first game has been completely revamped and is much more complex in the sequel, with more monsters and a unique rotation system that requires more strategy during fights. Fans of Pokémon-style RPGs will no doubt want to check this one out, as it contains many similar elements. Watch for it this **winter**.





Ka

Introducing the current favorite for *EGM*'s prestigious "Totally F'ed Up Yet Oddly Entertaining Import Game of the Year" award (previous winners include Pepsiman and Vib Ribbon). Ka (Japanese for mosquito) puts you in the role of the title bug for an indoor flight simulator...of sorts. You buzz around rooms, collecting hidden bonus items and such, waiting for an opportunity to feed on the hapless Yamada family. Sometimes you need to lure your victims out into the open; try flicking off a lightswitch, or hitting the power button on the stereo or TV remote. Once you land on your host, push in the analog stick to bite, then twirl it in a circle to suck precious blood. But be careful—sip too fast, too slow, or for too long and splat! You're modern art. Better stay out of sight, too, or else you'll enter Battle mode, where the hunter becomes the hunted. It's bizarre but at times hilarious (including a Resident Evil-spoof warning "This game contains scenes which make you feel itchy"). There's **no chance in hell** of **Sony** flying this mosquito over to America.

WHO WANTS TO BE A

sit-at-home contestant who faces mind bending questions, orders in Chinese food and then, while taking a bathroom break to ponder the advantages of certain lifelines over others, realizes that you could always just push pause and look up the answer on the Internet, but knows that because you're at home, there's no need to worry about making a fool of yourself on national TV and besides, just like on the actual show, you really don't stand a chance of ever becoming a

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MOIGLE'S SECRET PROJECT™

ROCK YOU LIKE A HURRICANE KICK

Cooked up for Street Fighter Alpha to poke fun at Art of Fighting characters, Dan Hibiki was Capcom's friendly jab at SNK. Sporting a pink gi, a couple of near-useless moves, and a super taunt, he's been made weaker and weaker as time goes on, and now he's back for one more feeble round in the limelight.

Capcom vs. SNK Pro

Capcom

Capcom

1-2

Fighting

Out Now (Japan)

www.ncsx.com

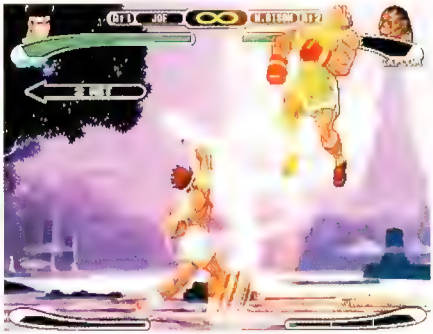
Street Fighter III

www.capcom.co.jp

New characters, stages and play mechanics for hardcore SF fans.

It's basically CvS with a new coat of paint.

Joe Higashi's one super move. Lame.



Have you ever wondered what it would be like to touch a star? Guile finds out via Evil Iori. You won't need to unlock the strung-out Iori this time—he comes standard in CvS Pro.

You call that an uppercut? Now THIS is an uppercut! Welcome back, Joe Higashi!

BOTTOM LINE

Where's the Beef?

OK, we realize you've got a magazine to read and just want to know what's so different about CvS Pro, so here's the breakdown:

Two New Fighters

Dan Hibiki and Joe Higashi. Dan is faithfully reproduced, but Joe is near-useless.

Four New Stages

Actually quite cool. Not a reason to buy the game, but a fun addition.

Secrets Unlocked

Morrigan, Nakoruru, EX and "evil" fighters, and ratio adjustment are all available from the start.

Altered Gameplay

All characters have been adjusted for better balance, particularly ratio 1, 3 and 4 fighters, and earning groove points has been made slightly more difficult.

Either Capcom is striving for perfection or they saw a way to bank a few extra yen under the 'vs.' banner. The first Capcom vs. SNK was no slouch, earning a silver award from us in issue #139. But the game sure left room for improvement—did Capcom use it? Well, sort of.

Capcom doesn't know if this version will ever hit American soil, but the fact that it's so geared toward hardcore gamers won't help. Heck, it makes you feel like a poseur for looking at the title screen the wrong way. You'll only recognize the two new fighters if you have a strong history in Street Fighter Alpha or Fatal Fury, in which case you should know why this is the perfect game for Dan Hibiki to guest star in (if not, check the page topper). He's thankfully retained all three of his super moves (including the hilarious super taunt) for this version. In contrast, Joe (the other new character) is one of the most worthless guys in the game, thanks to his overall weakness and solitary super move.

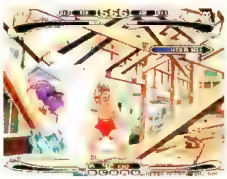
Fortunately, new fighters aren't all you'll get from CvS Pro. All of the secrets from CvS are unlocked, including the EX (enhanced) versions of many fighters and the five hidden warriors. The real prize, however, is the adjustable ratio system, which you had to earn in CvS. The original game gave you four slots to fill with fighters who occupied anywhere from 1-4 spots each, based on their strengths. In Pro, you can make any character as strong or weak as you wish by changing the ratio level. For example, you can play as a weaker level 1 Sagat (normally level 3) and still have three spaces left to fill in your lineup!

Without getting into too much detail about technical tweaks, each fighter's relative strength has been recalibrated. Level 1 fighters are far less potent, while those occupying three or four slots are accordingly more powerful. I'd go into the minutia of how Capcom made it harder to earn Groove Points, but unless you're on a Street Fighter team or something, you'd probably rather hear me talk about microeconomics.

CvS Pro is what CvS should have been—a better balanced game that gives you the freedom to play any combination of fighters you wish. While those who fronted the cash for CvS might be grinding their teeth about now, don't blame yourselves, Capcom does this all the time (remember SFIII: Double Impact?). We'll let you know if it comes stateside.

—Jonathan Dudlak

Dan (left) and Joe (corner) debut, while Akuma (below) and Morrigan (far bottom right) represent two of five formerly hidden fighters.



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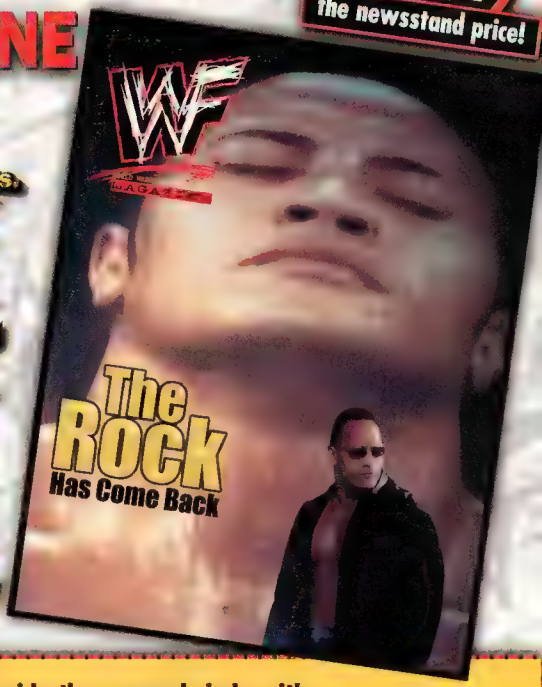

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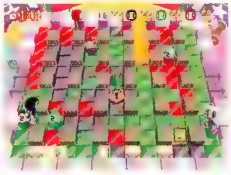
A01EG

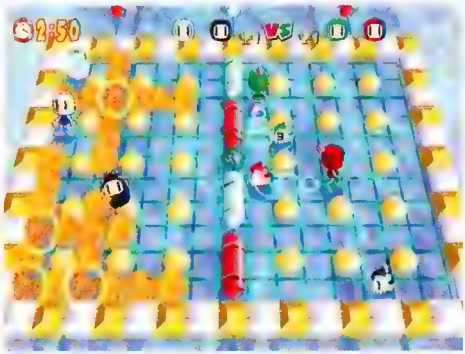
Bomberman Online

If ever there was a game screaming for online support, it's Bomberman. Let's face it—over the years, Bomberman has been the ultimate party game. This **September** the party will include thousands of SegaNet users, bombin' each other four at a time.

Bomberman Online is far from a stale retread of previous editions. In fact, it's got a number of new features sure to satisfy long-time Bomberman fans and newcomers alike. New play modes include Submarine Attack, in which players send bombs underwater to their opponents' side of the play field; Hyper Bomber, in which players try to clear a path to a gate and escape; and Panel Paint, in which players change the color of floor panels with their bombs.

In addition to a new oversized map in Internet Battle mode that might allow more than four players to compete (we're not sure yet), there's also a new character editor that lets you create your own custom Bomberman. (No, **Sega** didn't include a Ted Kaczynski face—we checked.)



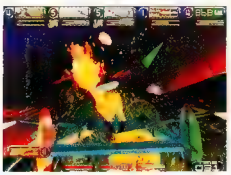


Propeller Arena

The Dreamcast may be on its last legs, but **Sega** seems to be making good on its promise to deliver at least a few more network-compatible games, such as Propeller Arena: Aviation Battle Championship. If you're looking for a realistic flight sim with loads of complex missions, better look elsewhere; Propeller Arena is an arcade-style free-for-all set in the not-so-friendly skies.

Choose from one of eight oh-so-wacky characters and dive headlong into an online or offline multiplayer dogfight. The game's eight arenas seem intentionally small and claustrophobia-inducing, ensuring lots of frantic action. They're also littered with weapon power-ups and environmental hazards, such as erupting volcanoes and launching rockets.

Propeller Arena also includes plenty of challenging mini-games and real-time, in-game chat, perfect for talking trash to online foes. The bullets start flying in **September**.



He's Back!

Everyone's favorite bomb-toting Hero returns, delivering the addictive gameplay you crave, along with frantic new modes and online play!

Fast and furious online multi-player mayhem!

New gameplay modes like Hyper Bomber, Ring Match, and more!

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BOMBERMAN ONLINE

ONLINE MULTI-PLAYER

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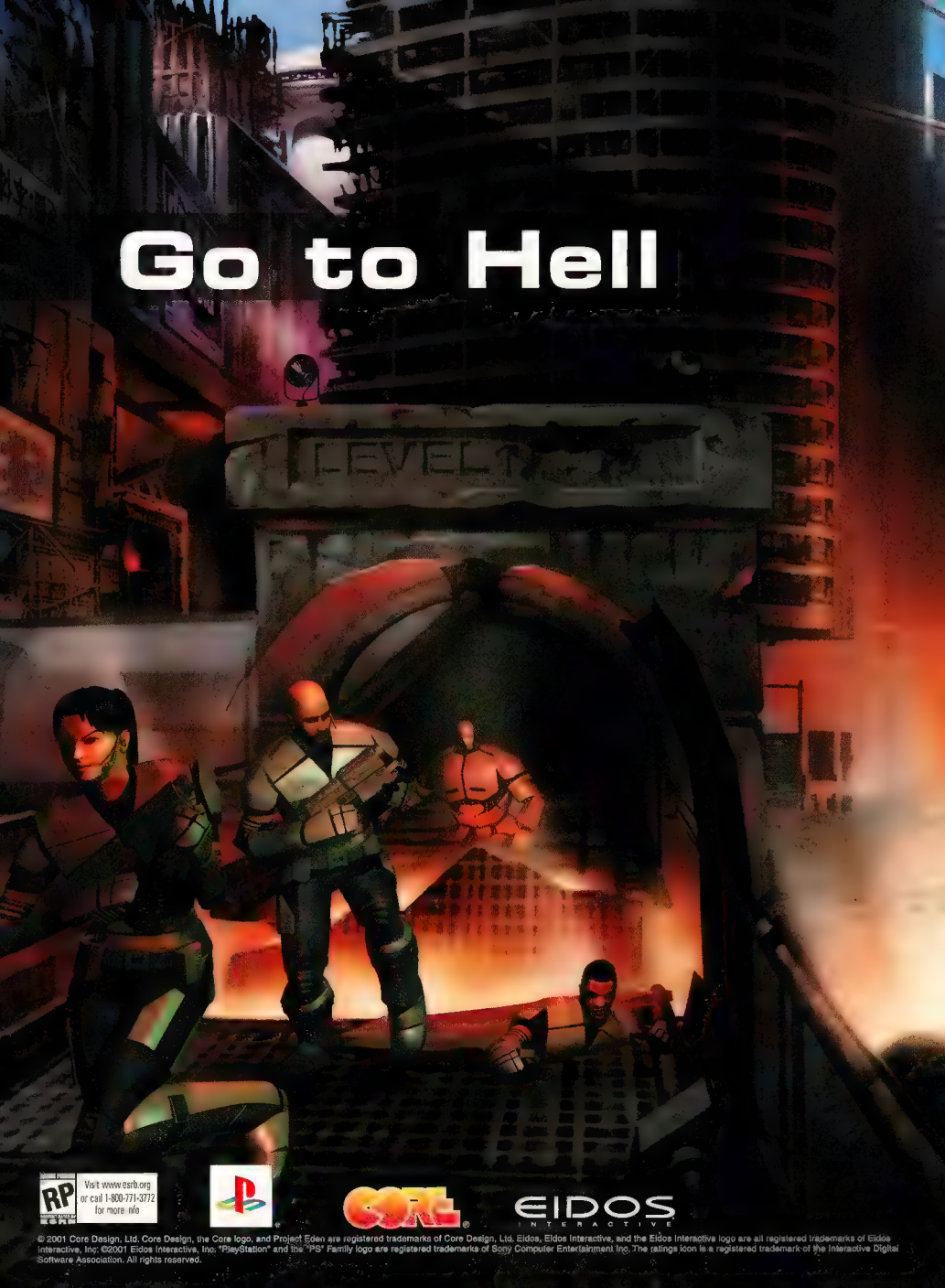

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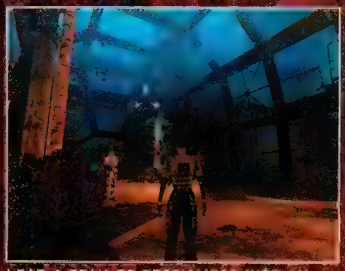
Due to severe overpopulation, the Earth's diameter is increasing with the growth of towering mega-cities. As civilization climbs high into the sky, it buries below its refuse; criminals, the wretched and the deranged. Now, amidst reports of violence and atrocity in lower levels, a service crew has disappeared without a trace.



Lead a team of specialists into an abyss of vast caverns, snake-like passageways and luring dead-ends.

Tread lightly. The depths belong to twisted cults, mutants and hideous creatures that were never meant to exist.

Play in single player mode, or with up to 4 others in multiplayer.

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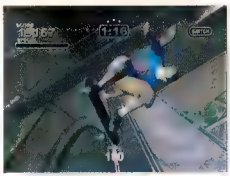
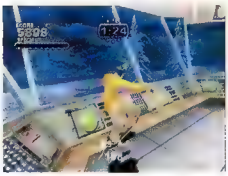
Shrek's box-office gross after 11 weeks—making it the biggest hit thus far of 2001.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X

Activision was kind enough to let us play more levels of THPS 2x, which is due in **November**. After the shock of holding the massive Xbox controller wore off, we were reminded why we love this game so much. It's smooth, chock-full of tricks, and controls like a champ. The fact that it contains every level from THPS 1 & 2 and five bonus levels doesn't hurt either. The new revert move and the four-player modes are great as well.



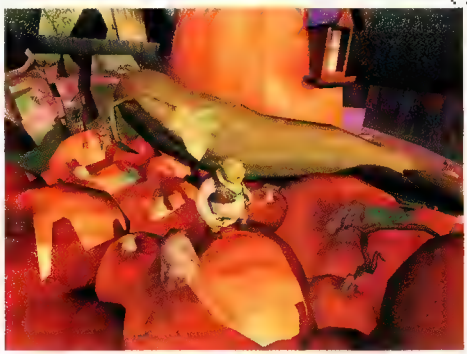


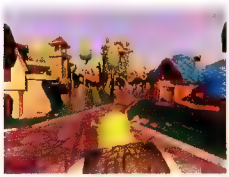
Dead or Alive 3

Team Ninja's Tomonobu Itagaki insists on using the most powerful hardware, and that's why **Tecmo** is putting the third installment of their voluptuous, multi-tiered fighting franchise on the Xbox. Super hi-res textures, larger, interactive environments, and an improved camera help keep the new fighters and original crew duking it out as bone-crunchingly fast as they can. DOA3 ships this **November**.

Shrek

In **November, TDK Mediactive** picks up the story of Shrek where the movie left off. Our green ogre buddy must search Fairytaleland for pages missing from the book Princess Fiona wrote, detailing their adventures. To find them, he has to solve puzzles, lend a helping hand to the inhabitants of places like Cinderella's Castle and Mother Goose Land, and defeat enemies via flatulence (like we do in real life).





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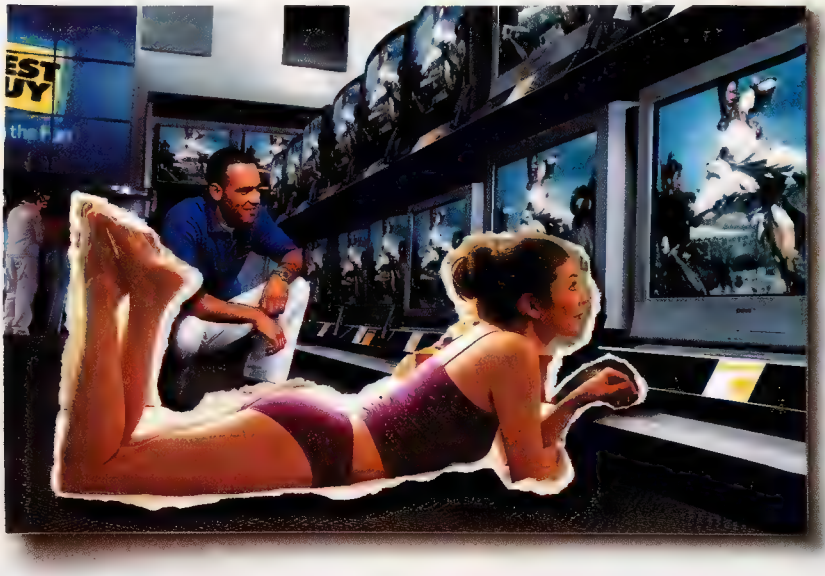


PREVIEW

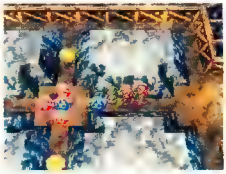
NIPPON ICHI!!

Dragon Quest VII, the Japanese version of DWVII, holds the high honor of being the best-selling PS game ever in Japan, selling over 4 million copies. This should tide Enix over until the next Dragon Quest is ready, probably around 2010 or so.

Dragon Warrior VII

Publisher: Enix
Developer: Enix
Players: 1
Genre: RPG
% Done: 85%
Release: November 2001
Also try: DWI&II, III (GBC)
Web Address: www.enix.com
The Good: 180+ hours of classic DW gameplay.
The Bad: The graphics are pretty "classic" too.
And The Ugly: The CG cutscenes are truly horrible.

Battles now feature animated monsters and practically zero load times.



In true DW fashion, the dungeons are filled with well-designed traps and puzzles.

It's hard to believe, but it's been nearly 10 years since an original Dragon Warrior game was released in the U.S. (it was 1992 when DWIV hit the first Nintendo). Finally, the decade-long hiatus is almost over, as Dragon Warrior VII is about to make its long-awaited debut in America.

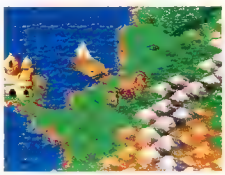
The story starts out simple enough. You play a fisherman's son who lives in a small village on the only island in the entire world. One day, you and your friends stumble upon an ancient ruin that houses the secret to the disappearance of the rest of the world. By collecting special stone fragments, known as Mysterious Shards, you can utilize the ruins to travel back in time to other lands and free the inhabitants of their troubles, allowing them to exist in the present. This is the basis for the game's massive quest, which reportedly spans 100 hours.

Upon popping in Dragon Warrior VII, long-time fans of the series may be surprised to notice that, graphically, things haven't evolved very much over the years. Sure, the game world is now fully 3D, but it's still viewed from a top-down perspective (you can rotate and zoom out the camera, at least), and the characters are still minimally animated 2D sprites. But while DWVII may not be the most visually stunning RPG to hit these shores in recent times, the game makes up for it in another, far more important area: gameplay.

DWVII is loaded with deep, engaging RPG play. It has tons of lands to explore, huge, well-designed dungeons, and the usual assortment of diversions, like the Casino and a new Monster Park where you can befriend and collect monsters. The battle system is mostly unchanged from past games (first-person, turn-based, menu-driven combat). Monsters now animate, and you can talk to your partners to get advice, but it's mostly familiar territory.

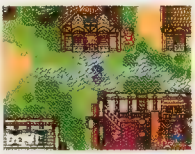
The Job system, on the other hand, has been vastly improved. Similar to Final Fantasy V, your characters can take on various Jobs, each of which allows you to learn a variety of Spells and Abilities. Once learned, these stay with you forever and can be carried over to new Jobs, where you can learn even more skills. Eventually, you can combine Jobs to create new, more advanced professions and work your way up to the most powerful of character classes. In addition, you can collect Monster Hearts from defeated enemies, which, when equipped, allow you to learn that monster's abilities and stats, providing for even more variety in your arsenal of techniques. It's really addicting.

With a game as big as DWVII, we could go on for days explaining all of its features, but alas, you'll just have to wait to experience it this November. This game could end up being a perfect argument for never judging a book by its cover. Hopefully the massive quest and intricate story will make the dated graphics a moot point. —*John Ricciardi*

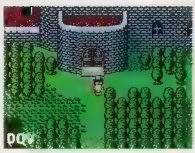


M.I.A.

The Lost DQs



U.S. gamers missed out on an entire generation of Dragon Warrior. In Japan, Enix released four Dragon Quest games for the Super Famicom (Japan's Super Nintendo): Dragon Quest V, VI, and enhanced remakes of Dragon Quest I, II and III. The remakes have since been ported to Game Boy Color and released in America, but DQV and DQVI remain exclusive to Japan. Hopefully Enix will continue with the handheld remakes and bring IV, V and VI to Game Boy Advance.



Winner of IGN's Best of 2000 Reader's Vote Award!

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Readers' Vote
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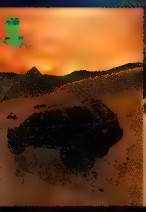

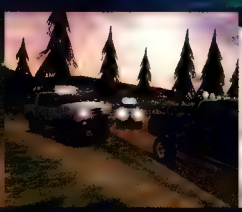

EVOLUTION ONLY WORKS IN THE WILD.

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STILL KICKING

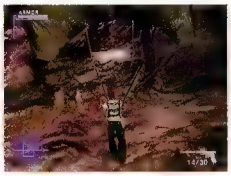
Surprised to see a high-profile title like Syphon Filter 3 debut on the PS1? You shouldn't be. The system was the best-selling piece of hardware during the 2000 holiday season. According to EBWorld.com, 59 new PS1 games are expected to be released between August and November—not bad for a unit running on technology that's half a decade old.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

"Think of THPS3 [PS1] as the little brother of the PS2 version," says Jeff Poffenbarger, associate producer at Activision. "You don't actually see the earthquake [which you trigger in your career objectives in the PS2 incarnation]—it's like you're there the day after it's triggered." So while Tony 3 on the PS1 lacks many of the interactive objectives of its PS2 big bro, the two versions share many traits in the level-design department. "In some cases, the levels are the same size as in the PS2 version," Poffenbarger says. "In others, they're two-thirds the size, but we add new areas to make up for it." The game does pack many of the new moves, including the "revert," which allows you to continue linking tricks after landing from a halfpipe. In addition, a new balance meter keeps you on the high side of a grind. **Activision** has this pup slated for a **November** release.

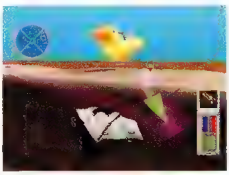
Syphon Filter 3

We've been playing the final PS1 installment of **Sony**'s action-adventure series, and, as you can probably tell from the screens, it looks a lot like the first two games (despite some slightly improved cinemas). The flashback-driven story picks up right where Syphon 2 left off, only this time you'll not only control Gabe and Lian, but Lawrence Mujari and one other mystery character as well. Those thirsty for quick action will love the new mini-games, where you can choose from five different themes (target shooting, disarming bombs, assassination, kill everyone, or steal a briefcase) in any of 10 unlockable levels. SF3 is due **late September**.



Twisted Metal: Small Brawl

If you thought your neighborhood bully was mean, try having Twisted Metal's psychotic ringmaster steal your milk money. **Sony**'s Small Brawl (due in **fall**) is a prequel that gives a glimpse at how a young Calypso wrangled 15 other teens (Sweet Tooth, Mr. Grimm, etc.) into honing their homicidal driving to prep for the big leagues. This RC car brawler isn't as dark as the PS2 version, but don't let the colorful graphics fool you into thinking that only diaper wearers will enjoy it. Sure, bottle rockets and explosive fireworks are more tame than machine guns and hellfire, but they'll knock the crap out of those miniature vehicles just as efficiently.



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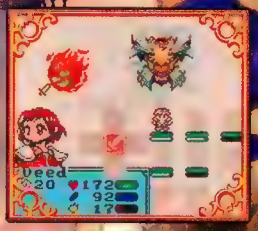
The island of the Sinistrals, Doom Island, sank deep into the sea after the Second Doom Island War. It was believed to be in an eternal sleep, but has once again begun silently beating, preparing to make its appearance in the sky for the third time.

The evil Sinistrals have again been resurrected and released an unforeseen terror on the land. A force has awakened within you...a Spiritual Force that draws you to a conflict that will save the world! The power of Maxim's legendary bloodline lives in you...

The thread of destiny guides you through an adventurous journey looking for an unknown destination!



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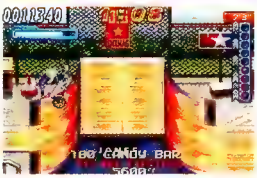
WORLD ADVANCED

Just as we went to print these new shots of Mario Advance 2 were released. Right now all we know is this is basically Super Mario World on the GBA. We should know more about this game next month, following Nintendo's Japanese trade show, Spaceworld.

Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX



Hot on the heels of **Activision**'s stellar GBA version of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 comes Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX.

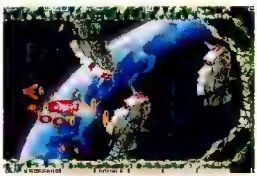
Rip it up on six different street, vert and dirt courses as "The Condor" himself, or one of seven other pro riders. Each maze-like level is filled with secret areas, interactive objects and items to collect, and an easy-to-learn trick and combo system lets you shred with the best of 'em in no time.

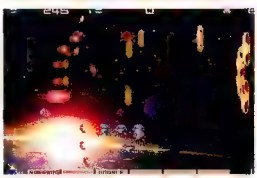
While the game lacks Tony Hawk's graphical prowess, it does have some nice visual effects, including lens flare and motion blur, seen when you pull off a particularly gnarly special. Game Boy Advance owners will be catching mad air this **fall**.

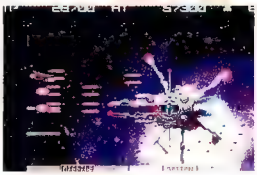
Doom

PlayStation. N64. Saturn. 3DO. Jaguar. Even the 32X, fer cryin' out loud. id software's classic first-person shooter has appeared on plenty of systems over the last decade, so why do we give a flying frag about the GBA version? Well it's portable, of course, but check out everything else it's got: two-player co-op or four-player deathmatch (each GBA needs a cart), 32 levels, plus the save-anywhere and auto-map functions from the PC game. And, just when you thought you might go blind from squinting at that dark GBA screen, you can adjust the brightness (hallelujah!) and turn the cool dynamic lighting on or off (see bottom screen: left half dynamic, right half normal). It runs smooth, and the sounds are perfect—we can't wait 'til **September**.

Gradius Galaxies



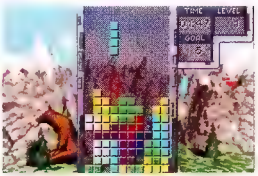


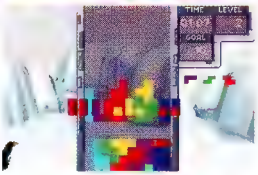


Kudos to **Konami**. First Castlevania, and now a brand-new Gradius on the GBA. They're taking respectable 2D franchises and giving them new life where they belong.

Developed by **Mobile 21**, a joint venture between Nintendo and Konami, this is an entirely new Gradius adventure with eight original levels. Gradius Galaxies is undeniably old school. The methodical, slower-paced game speed, the customizable weapons system, and the familiar level motifs all return to give GG a classic look and feel. The game even offers a "hint mode" for those stumped by a particular level. Like all good things in this industry, GG comes out in **November**.

Tetris Worlds





The day when a Nintendo handheld system doesn't get a Tetris game is the day hell freezes over. **THQ** is delivering the series, pumped up on steroids, to GBA owners this **fall**. You're not only getting the classic puzzler, you'll also be getting a host of new games. Sticky Tetris. Fusion Tetris. Hot-Line Tetris. Square Tetris. Cascade Tetris. What does it all mean? It means this cart will be the ultimate time waster, like others before it.

Create squares instead of lines. Let pieces cascade to form combos. Stick similarly colored pieces together. Throw your traditional Tetris way of thinking out the door, 'cause new strategies and gameplay await you. If you're too set in the classic Tetris-style of play, however, this cart isn't for you.

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2 Monstrous RPGs.

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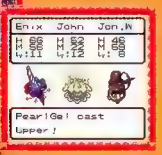

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Mild Language
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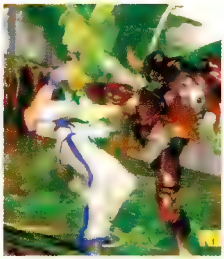
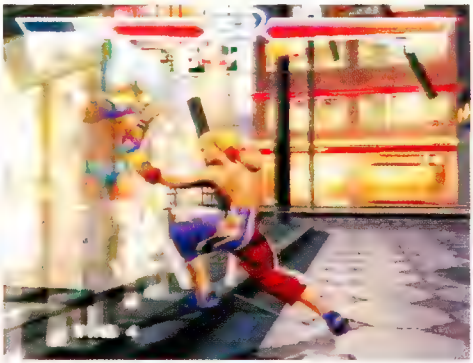
Tekken 4

Jonathan Dudlak and James Mielke have their way with an early version of Tekken 4 in the arcade.



Check out the detail on the water and Yoshimitsu's garb as he gets a leg-up from Hwoarang. The game runs on PS2-based hardware, so you can expect similar graphics at home.



Putting your opponent through a glass phone booth is just one of the ways to get busy with the arenas in Tekken 4. Don't worry, it's all part of the act.

VS

Jon "Glass Jaw" Dudlak, Associate Editor

Back in college, we played Tekken 2 night after night because it was the best 3D fighter on the PS1 at the time. As time went on, though, I lost interest in the game because it felt so stale—the combat wasn't fast and the fighters all felt the same. Going in to play Tekken 4, I was anticipating destroying Milkmaid with the same rehashed gameplay, but was instead surprised to find a lot of cool changes. The arenas are still gigantic—you can walk around in them almost endlessly, but I'm glad they finally made them finite. It adds so much more to the gameplay. You can whack an opponent up against a window and shatter it, or slam him into a brick wall for some extra-impact damage. And there's something satisfying about being able to just walk up to a phone booth and level it with a few side kicks, or Milkfat's body, for that matter. My personal favorite was sending three bodies into the air with Steve's uppercut when Milkpants stumbled too close to the maddening crowd. Speaking of which, all the environments and background animations look amazing—they're more realistic than Tag Tournament's, as are the character models. I had reservations about the new reversal move (where you grab and trade places with your opponent), but after I used it to send Milkdud into a wall for some damage, I was hooked. The sidestep from T3 has also been preserved as a major tactical move. T4 ain't Soul Cali 2, but it made a jaded 2D fan like me take notice long enough to annihilate Milkbone's sad Xiaoyu.

James "Muffin" Mielke, West Coast Editor

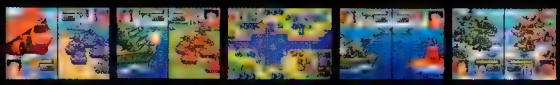
Pffbbtt! Jon's lanky off-balance kicks sliced hot air as my Xiaoyu ducked under his stuff and broke off many a Lotus Palm in his junk. I too feel as if Tekken's backgrounds benefit from the newly finite dimensions, and now that Tekken 4 has adopted Virtua Fighter 3's environmental strategy, it's a much better game. The environments gave me a harder time than Dudslap though. Like the time I stuffed him in a corner, but couldn't see exactly where or how I was pounding on his ass, because the camera obscured my view while he ran off to lick his wounds. Speaking of running away, T4 still has the sidestep dodge move, but it's no Soul Calibur-styled 8 Way Run. Quite a few times I attempted to dodge and work a side-throw into the mix, only to get slapped en route. Throw moves don't always result in a damaging attack now, either, but often whip your opponent (like Dud's simpering Steve Fox) around 180 degrees, leaving his backside exposed. Needless to say, D-lak took a caning on more than one occasion. The characters *are* beefier, but Cuddley Dudley's dreaming if he thinks they look "amazing." On the whole I'd say the graphics look marginally better than TTT's, which was a port of a System 12 game (TTT arcade), which was an enhanced version of a PlayStation game (Tekken 3), which was a port of a system 12 game (Tekken 3 arcade). Basically, I expected a lot more out of Tekken 4 (and Mr. D-sak). Hopefully the PS2 version will address at least a few of the game's "issues"; J-diddy is hopeless.

The arenas in Tekken 4 are huge. Hide behind palm trees on the beach (left) or wrestle far off shore (right) without ever leaving the stage! You'll have your choice of where to start the round on most stages, as well.

Notice who Kazuya is attacking there (left)? It's not Yoshimitsu; he's on the floor building up his power while an observer takes it on the chin in the highly interactive "Fight Club" stage. (Right) King loses to Law the hard way.

PEP RALLY, ADVANCED.

"Rah!" "Go team!" These are difficult things to hear over tank fire, so you will understand why cheerleaders are not among your legions of troops to command in new Advance Wars for Game Boy® Advance. Instead, make use of your wits and a tasty array of weaponry to humiliate up to three other people dumb enough to stand in the way of your path to glory. | LIFE ADVANCED.™



EVERYONE E Mild Violence

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RICK MCCRANK, LINCOLN UEDA, KERRY GETZ, COLIN MCKAY, CHRIS SENN, CHAD FERNANDEZ, CARLOS DE ANDRADE, BOB BURNQUIST

2,009 NUMBER OF POLYGONS USED TO MODEL BOB BURNQUIST.

2.4 Billion TOTAL NUMBER OF TRICK COMBINATIONS.

201,126 NUMBER OF ATTENDEES AT THE 2000 X GAMES IN SAN FRANCISCO.

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levels from the X Games to the decks of a passenger liner with hidden challenges and secret areas. With ESPN X Games Skateboarding, it's the details that count.

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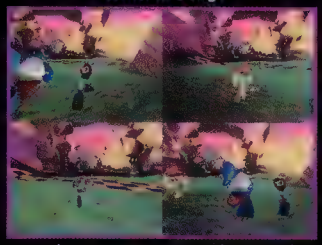
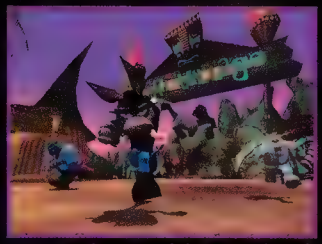
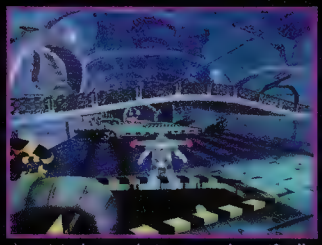


Thwart opponents with traps, trickery and explosive attacks.



Race a motley crew of characters through treacherous, obstacle-filled terrains.



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"You found me. OK, I'll tell you what you want to know."

Submerged for months, away from the prying eyes of the press and public to finish **Metal Gear Solid 2**, creator Hideo Kojima finally comes up for air.

BY MARK MACDONALD

It's quiet. Too quiet. The firestorm of hype for Metal Gear Solid 2—fueled by two movie-style trailers and a playable demo—may have been deafening just a few months ago, when message boards and magazines (yes, especially this one)

out of Kojima's mouth. But then—poof!—suddenly Kojima-san vanished. It was all part of his plan to "submerge" (in part to build excitement, in part just so he

secretive it would make George Lucas jealous.

That is, until now: *EGM* has scored the only interview in the world with Kojima since he dropped off the radar this past May. Here's the latest on what he has to say about his game, his crunch-mode schedule, his goofball humor and more, along with a few previously unpublished snippets from our conversation at the last Electronic Entertainment Expo. Think of it as a primer to get you ready for Metal Gear Solid 2—the game many of you bought a PlayStation 2 for—before it hits Nov. 13.

Turn the page to break the silence...

KOJIMA

METAL GEAR FOR DUMMIES:

SOLID SNAKE

AFTER LIFE & TERRORIST

SAY CHEESE

THE PLOT BEHIND HERE

BIG BOSS

Big Boss, aka Naked Snake, aka Solid Snake's dad, was also originally known as Gray Fox in both of the first two games. Before Snake killed him at the end of MG2, B.B. told him (*Empire Strikes Back* style) he was Snake's father. In MGS we learn the details: Solid, Liquid and Solidus Snake were all cloned from Big Boss' DNA. The Big Boss clones were created by Liquid Snake's father, Dr. Hunter Chase, to recover the leftover pieces of his "dad" to cure genetic defects in himself and his soldiers.

LIQUID SNAKE:

Solid Snake's genetically engineered "brother," Liquid joined FoxHound after Solid retired. He was the leader in that whole messy "Hijack a nuclear weapon and launch the world's first on Shadow Moses Island in MGS. But Tanker Incident, Liquid's escape from Snake's ass-whoopin' and Metal Gear Solid: Snake Eater, Liquid returns for the sequel.

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Gallop Racer 2001 is so realistic that you don't have to get your fingernails dirty to feel like you're in the race. Feel the burn in your legs, the pounding of your heart and the wind in your face as you compete against other horses and players. Battle against the forces of nature as you race through snow, rain and mud during the day and at night. Play as a tournament jockey, master breeder, or betting spectator in the stands. With an all-new gambling feature, Gallop Racer 2001 puts you into the game!

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PlayStation.2

DIGITAL DEMO: THE MOVIE?

EDGE: Who knows you'll be a movie soon. Would you like to direct a movie?

EDGE: What genre a Metal Gear movie with someone else at the helm?

EDGE: Who would you like to see direct a Metal Gear movie?

PS2 VS XBOX VS GAMECUBE

EDGE: What do you think of the upcoming hardware wars?

LIQUID SNAKE'S RIGHT HAND

REVOLVER OCELOT

THE VOICE OF SOLID SNAKE

EDGE: You're a big Hollywood script editor now. Will it bring you back to Japan?

EDGE: Can all the upcoming projects be?

EDGE: Will you be working on Metal Gear Solid 3 again, or was once by something?

EDGE: What do you think of Sony's thinking behind

EDGE: As a world worthy opponent, what did you think of the Metal Gears?

COLONEL MIKHAIL SEVER LEV KRYLOV

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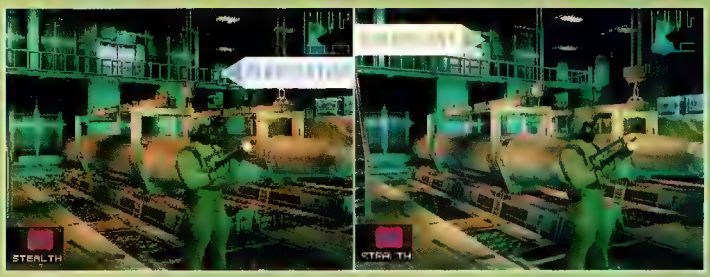
MGS ON THE DREAMCAST



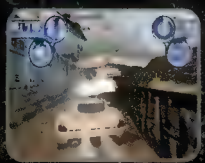
METAL GEAR RAY

COMMANDER SCOTT DOLPH

THE NINJA (AKA GREY FOX, AKA FRANK JEGGER)

SOLIDUS SNAKE (AKA GEORGE SEARS)

YOU CAN'T KILL WHAT YOU CAN'T CATCH.



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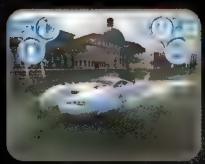

ON-THE-FLY MORPHING TRANSFORMS THE INTERCEPTOR FROM LETHAL STREET MACHINE TO DEADLY, JET-POWERED MARINE VEHICLE.

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PlayStation.2

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Violence

OH, YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING...

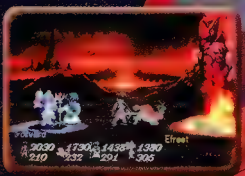
THE SNAKE PIT

TERRORIST ALIAND

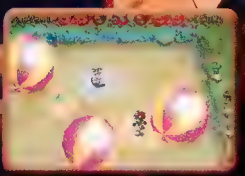
BURNING QUESTIONS

Tales of Destiny II

EXPLORE VAST WORLDS IN SEARCH OF POWERFUL POTIONS, WEAPONS AND CLUES.



USE SPELLS OR STEEL TO BATTLE TO THE DEATH WITH EVIL HENCHMEN.



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And so begins the adventure for friends Reid and Farah. But it will not be easy.

The heroes must battle not only the challenges of an unknown force,

but also the demons that exist within themselves.

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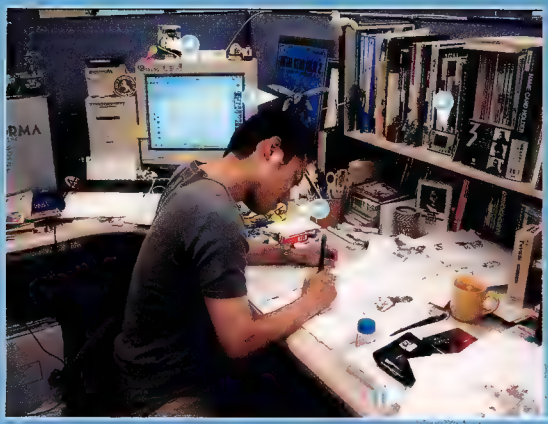
WHERE EAGLES DARE

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE JOURNALISM

WHAT'S MY NAME?



GRAPHICS SUPERVISOR YOJI SHINKAWA AT WORK

1. A rough version of our cover this month.
2. One of Nintendo's old Game & Watch handhelds that Yoji told us he was so fond of in our interview. It'd fetch a fine price on eBay, if we could just reach it...
3. A model of Metal Gear Ray. Each of the upcoming McFarlane Toys MGS2 figures will come with a piece of a Ray model—collect 'em all and you can have your very own amphibious death-dealing super machine.
4. Tweety Bird mouse pad and figurine. When we asked Yoji about all the Tweety Bird items he told us, "I cannot stand being alone. That's why I make sure Tweety keeps me company." ...Alrighty then. Perhaps we should be moving along to the next part of the office.

GENERAL STAFF

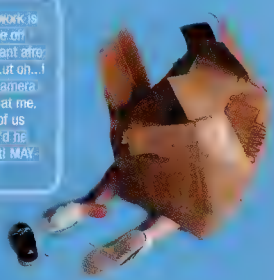
1. This guy's playing MGS2, but don't bother squinting to get a peek at what's on his TV—we already tried it (aided with computers, no less) and couldn't see squat.
2. Sure, it may look like a typical Japanese office—one large crowded room, separated only by short cubicles and cutesy stuffed animals—but look closely and you may find a few tell-tale signs that this is where MGS2 is being created. Say, this rifle just lying on the floor here, for example...

MORE RANDOM STAFF MEMBERS

[redacted] is so much tougher in every respect. There are more people now, and the air conditioners don't help much because of the heat from all of us." Eww.

Maybe some of the staff read how Kojima and his son like the games and are sucking up to the bossman? Who knows.

Watching Mr. Shinkawa at work is truly amazing. It reminds me of that guy on PBS with the giant afro. He starts with nothing but...ut oh...I think Shinkawa heard the camera. Oh crap...he's looking right at me. Nobody here, just a bunch of us fresh oranges...wait, where'd he get that huge sword? Christi MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MA—



Wireless Gaming

Calling all gamers: Cell phones are revolutionizing the way gamers play on the go—at least in Japan and Europe. But when will we get to dial up Resident Evil on our phones? Please hold while *EGM* investigates.

For such handy little gizmos, cell phones sure seem like the scourge of humanity. They squawk in movie theaters. We nearly lost supermodel Niki Taylor in an accident attributed to a phone-distracted driver. And now that our bosses or parents or in-laws can reach us anywhere at any time, we're ready to flush our Nokias down the can.

But before you give up the little beeping things for good, consider this ultimate redeeming factor: cell phones are the game industry's number-one growth field, at a time when software companies are starved for profits. Across Europe and Asia, wireless phones have quickly become standard issue for the young and hip, who use them to peruse the Web, send instant messages and, yes indeed, play games. The wireless gaming revolution hasn't kicked off here in the States just yet, but it's coming. We only need to look overseas for a preview of this next big thing in the game biz.

LUCKY JAPANESE

The concept of the "cell phone" (definition: a mobile phone usable under a small service area, or cell) dates way back to the 1940s, but it wasn't until 1982 that the FCC finally authorized cellular networks in the U.S. The industry hasn't looked back since, snatching up more than 75 million American wireless users. Still, the phones most of us use are just that—phones. You talk into it, then put it back into your purse, pocket or Power Rangers fanny pack. The idea of a truly interactive cell phone wasn't realized until i-mode took over Japan two years ago.

A product of NTT DoCoMo, a mega-profitable subsidiary of the Japanese telecommunications giant NTT, i-mode is the closest anyone's gotten yet to cramming the entire Internet into the palm of your hand. Press the button marked "i" on a compatible phone, and you're taken to i-mode's main menu, with over 700 official (NTT-sanctioned) sites at your fingertips. You don't have to be "official" to be in, though: I-mode sites are written in a subset of good old HTML, the same language used to build regular Web pages. Thousands of unofficial sites have popped up, covering everything from horror flicks to horoscopes.

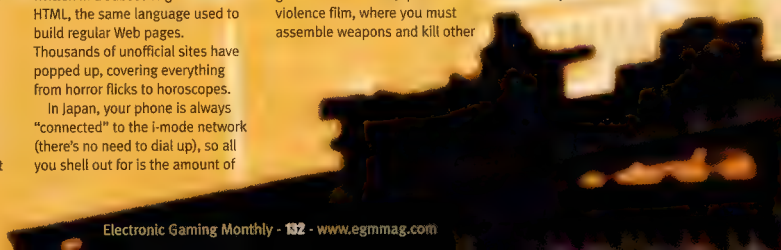
In Japan, your phone is always "connected" to the i-mode network (there's no need to dial up), so all you shell out for is the amount of information you download. The base rate is 0.3 yen per 125 bytes; this translates to a few pennies to download the average i-mode page (at a truckin' 9600 baud). Most game sites are "premium" outfits; they charge an extra monthly fee (usually a few bucks) on the Japanese gamer's phone bill.

How deeply has i-mode pervaded Japanese culture? Let's just pretend that you're one of the 22 million i-mode users NTT DoCoMo claims it reaches in Japan. (Let's also say you have a girlfriend, which isn't a given, we know, but bear with us.) You wake up one sunny Saturday to the tune of your phone's alarm; your girlfriend downloaded a Hello Kitty alarm clock onto your phone just to spite you. You get dressed, then tap out a message to her to meet up near the rail station. After checking Japan Rail's i-mode site to find out when the next train to Shinjuku is due, you decide to meet at precisely 3:07 p.m. to catch the express. Until then, you kill time by playing Net Battle Royale, a silly yet addictive text game based on the Japanese cult violence film, where you must assemble weapons and kill other human players as you tour a tersely described virtual island. Once the appointed hour comes, you head for the station, hook up with your girl, and head for Tokyo's city center. Oh, but what will you do once you get there? I-mode to the rescue: You fearlessly bring up sites listing hot cafes, walking tours and club dates.

The ingenuity of some i-mode Web sites is astounding. Didn't get to the station in time? There's a site that has 800 excuses to give your girlfriend. Need something to read on the train? Another site has hundreds of out-of-copyright novels to read, one very tiny screen at a time. Always arguing over who takes the check at dinner? Use an i-mode site to play Russian roulette to see who gets stuck with the bill.

WHAT ABOUT THE GAMES?

In the beginning, most i-mode games were by necessity very simple, action-free affairs. The first major early believer was Hudson Soft, which released Miracle Quest last September. Reminiscent of

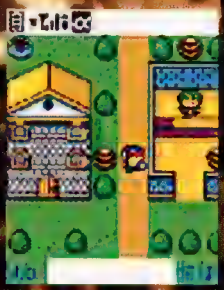


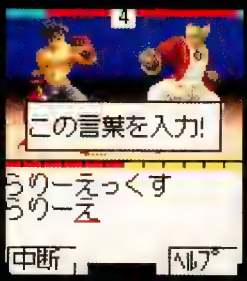
written by

Kevin Gifford

early Nintendo Entertainment System RPGs, Miracle Quest has the player exploring a somewhat twisted version of Japan, fighting cute monsters, building up levels and, in every nuance of the phrase, having a good ol' time. New area maps and quests are added to the game every month by Hudson, and despite redefining the term "bare-bones" with its visuals, Miracle Quest is both strangely alluring and a lovely way to kill 20 minutes of otherwise useful time.

Despite Hudson's best efforts, though, it wasn't until the debut this past January of i-appli, NTT DoCoMo's new generation of mobile phones, that other software houses began taking a serious interest in wireless. Offering a larger, full-color screen





Things to come: Japanese gamers have seen a revolution in their cell-phone games, from simplistic stuff like the i-mode sensation Miracle Quest (far left) to the fancier i-appli version (left) that hit earlier this year. Now they're playing i-appli-powered incarnations of hot arcade franchises like Tekken Battle Command (right). So when do we get to play? Expect games like these to hit the next wave of U.S. phones in 2002.

and 16-voice FM-quality sound, i-appli phones are Java-compatible, which enables developers to finally make wireless games that don't just look like some tripped-up Web page made by a 13-year-old before bedtime.

The result has been an explosion of games from nearly every top Japanese software house. If you thought the Game Boy Advance had a lot of launch titles, then it'd be best to sit down for this: Nearly 100 different online game services now use i-appli, with hundreds of titles already shooting across Japanese airspace to happy cell-phone gamers. If Nintendo doesn't think it has a rival in the portable department, they've got to be kidding themselves.

If there's one disadvantage to the wireless wave of game distribution, it's the hit-and-miss factor of the software. Most cell phone-game distribution outfits advertise their wares via NTT's i-mode menu (which is quickly achieving maze-like complexity) and via their official sites. Konami may offer a couple of dinky screen-shots of Dance Dance Revolution action on their page, but actually jabbing at the phone keys with your gigantic thumbs to play it can require a little endurance. Sure, the games are cheap (never more than two or three bucks a month, plus download fees), but is forking over real dough to play what are essentially simple Java applets the best way to blow that meager McDonald's paycheck?

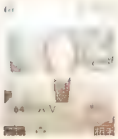
But that's just it. These aren't just Java applets—done well, they can get under your skin in a way no other genre can. The first inkling of the medium's true power came when Bandai released Love by Mail, a game where you exchange messages with one of five virtual girlfriends and try to keep your relationship healthy for as long as possible. Despite being completely text-based, Love by Mail has attracted nearly 50,000 paying customers and is one of i-mode's most well-known success stories.

Wireless gaming is about more than just staring at a screen—it's interacting, posting up your high scores, talking with other people (virtual or real), and just living the good life online. Sony and Sega may go on about how networked gaming will storm the industry, but NTT DoCoMo and others shut their traps and are just doing it. In Japan, at any rate.

Any U.S. Web-enabled phone, such as the $200 SCH-8500 from Samsung, can play simple WAP titles like Unplugged Games' Mage Duel (below).

Like most i-mode phones in Japan, Sony's SO503i has an "i" button (see circle) you jab to access a world of online content and games. Yep, even good ol' Space Invaders.

Cutting-edge FOMA phones, now on test in Tokyo, even offer video conferencing. You can chat with a support rep face to face, seen below.



WHEN'S OUR TURN?

In Japan, everybody uses cell phones. The country may have 120 million people and "only" 60 million keitai denwa (portable phones), but in reality this translates to everybody. If a Japanese friend asks you what kind of phone you have, "Oh, I don't have one" is most definitely the wrong answer. Girls will look at you as if you just dropped your pants in front of them. The wireless epidemic is so fierce that some of the younger members of Japanese society have forgotten how to use a pay phone.

Although similar conditions exist in Korea and parts of Europe (especially Finland—must be something in the arctic air), mobile-phone mania has completely failed to penetrate American shores. The U.S. commands a measly half of one percent of the world's wireless users, and that's including Palm Pilots and other Net-ready PDAs (see sidebar). The cause of this wireless lethargy is the subject of heated debate within the industry, but here are several major reasons:

• **The U.S. wireless industry's transmission standards.** While i-mode uses a pay-per-download system, most services here use WAP (Wireless Applications Protocol), which charges per minute of online time. American consumers hate being charged per minute. They hate it to bits.

• **There are too many different competing standards.** I-appli exists because NTT can use its semi-monopoly to dictate wireless standards to Japan's handset manufacturers. The result is a friendly coding environment that's breeding new games and applications every day. It'll be much more difficult to pull that off here, where Motorola, Nokia, AT&T, etc., each has its own bright ideas about how a wireless network should function. Without any central company to run the show, it's hard for one standard to emerge from the pack.

• **U.S. companies haven't quite figured out how to make money yet.** All official i-mode sites are approved by NTT DoCoMo, which plucks out a percentage of the earnings from the developer.

Meanwhile, American mobile content providers are making like their dot-com brethren and either relying on venture capital to survive or suddenly going bye-bye.

• **Cultural differences.** Some experts think wireless will never become truly universal in the U.S. They point out how consumers are too used to free local calls to pay for the same service on their cell phone, and how they drive cars instead of ride trains (and hence don't need to kill time sending love mail to virtual girlfriends).

Cont. on page 136

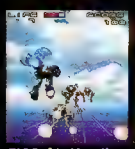
PDAs: The Other Wireless White Meat

Nintendo may have the handheld market locked up tighter than Calista Flockhart's fridge, while cell phones represent the new frontier of gaming on the go. But that's not stopping companies that make PDAs (Personal Data Assistants) from nabbing a piece of the portable pie. The Palm Pilot has been an incubator for developers who churn out simple games by the dozens. And while a souped-up Solitaire won't put the Game Boy Advance to shame, a new wave of PDAs known as Pocket PCs could.

Compaq's color iPaq (right, shown playing Turjah from Jimmy Software) is the first Pocket PC to ship with a control pad as its input device. Running at a hearty 206 MHz, this gizmo can compete with the GBA's visuals and do so much more. Game makers such as ZIOSoft are releasing dozens of titles (including PC stuff like Need for Speed and SimCity 2000), while underground arcade-ROM player MAME lets you play coin-op classics, thus turning iPaq into a mini-game museum. Still, Pocket PCs face hurdles. At an average price of $400, they won't make a dent in the gaming market (but those prices will fall in time).

—Kraig Kujawa

Jimmy Software's Doom4CE



ZIOSoft's Metalion

Kick Some Rusty Metal Butt!

PlayStation.2

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM
JOURNEY TO JABURO

Marvel at the detailed battlefield scenes and mobile suits with breathtaking digital graphics as seen in the movies! Experience firsthand the thrill of guiding your allies in their mission to conquer the enemy in mobile suit warfare. Relive scenes from the TV series or implement your own battle strategies to create whole new story lines.

TEEN T
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Animated Violence

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BANDAI

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM

So, despite great potential, the wireless marketplace outside of Asia has simply not taken off the way companies would like it to. Nokia, the wireless behemoth from Finland, won't even disclose how many phones using the WAP standard are out in Europe. "We are in the early stages. Expansion will come later," one vice president spins it. WAP has more companies behind it right now, but i-mode is the only system so far that's actually shown results in terms of solid games.

Not that we Westerners aren't trying. Digital Bridges, a Scottish outfit whose games grace the online portals of more than a dozen manufacturers' handsets, is launching a multiplayer strategy game based on Star Trek that features a persistent world that continues to change even when you aren't playing. "You can be in a boardroom, classroom, cab, bus, wherever, and your phone can tell you that you've arrived at the solar system you set out for a couple of hours before," says Brian Baglow, Digital Bridges' communications manager, "or that there was a Klingon Bird of Prey waiting for you and your ass is getting kicked." They're not stopping there. Digital Bridges has all sorts of ideas, including a giant game of tag that'd use the global-positioning receivers included with some handsets. If you're "it," for example, your phone's display points the way to the closest participating player, who you can sneak up to and "tag" with a close-range phone call. You'd never step away from the game!

Meanwhile in Japan, NTT is working on FOMA, the next generation of wireless Internet access. Allowing transfer rates of up to 350 kilobytes per second, the project's announced goal is to make applications like streaming video and the picture phone from *Pee-Wee's Playhouse* a reality within 2001. We unlucky Americans won't be seeing this technology until at least 2002, however, thanks to massive foot-dragging and a general lack of funding among the companies that own the licenses to broadcast information across the needed bandwidth. Plus, handset manufacturers still need to agree on a standard for mobile games in North America. They've taken baby steps: Nokia, Motorola, Ericsson and Siemens have already formed a new Mobile Games Interoperability forum to help establish such a standard, and AT&T claims it will have an i-mode-like infrastructure by the end of the year here. Then it's up to developers to start cranking out games like the ones previewed on the next two pages.

"You can be in a boardroom... bus, wherever, and your phone can tell you that you've arrived at the solar system you set out for a couple of hours before."

—Brian Baglow, Digital Bridges

Wireless, Tapped

In Japan, cell phones are a new link to online for game consoles

So what does Nintendo do when it's faced with serious portable competition for the first time in 12 years? Assimilate it, of course. The Mobile Adapter GB, released in Japan back in January, allows kids to connect wireless phones to the Game Boy Advance (or Game Boy Color) and use it to spread gaming love to the entire world over the Internet. (Internet access over conventional dial-up connections is expensive in Japan, where you must pay for local calls, so wireless Net access is an attractive option that's catching on big time.)

Nintendo is very careful with what they allow users to do with the Mobile Adapter GB. No Web or e-mail access here (not at first, anyway); the focus is fixed squarely on gaming, and Pokémon Crystal is the unit's flagship title. All the obvious Net features—online trading and battling with your friends—are available, but Pokémon Crystal's use of the adapter doesn't end there. The Battle Tower, located within the game world, lets you play a sort of virtual king of the hill, challenging real-life trainers and taking over their positions in the tower upon victory. The idea is to stay alive as long as possible, accepting new challengers and beating them into submission. There's also Mobile Stadium, a feature that lets you download battle logs from Pokémon Stadium tournaments across Japan and replay them on your N64 (assuming you have the latest Pokémon Stadium, of course). Of course, these features are missing from the U.S. version, because Nintendo has no plans to release the Adapter GB here.

Japanese gamers too old for all that stuff can try Mobile Golf, Camelot's latest GBC effort. It lets you download new courses and players (including the ever-popular Yoshi), participate in tournaments to win golf clubs and GBAs, and even view tips and strategies for each hole for about 10 cents a pop.

What does Sony think of all this? Not much, considering how far behind their own network strategy is. Although Sony promised a cable-based system for the PlayStation 2 in Japan within 2001, on March 29 they released a cable that allows you to use an i-mode phone as a modem for gaming. Not much supports it yet (the latest Tokyo Highway Battle has new car downloads and online lotteries), but Sony's pinning their hopes on i-mode mo Issho, the latest installment in the Dokodemo Issho games, which lets you download cute characters onto your PocketStation and chat with them. Not exactly epic, but the revolution's gotta start somewhere, right?

Let your Game Boy do the walking: The GBC gets connected courtesy of Nintendo's Mobile Adapter GB, which we'll never see here.

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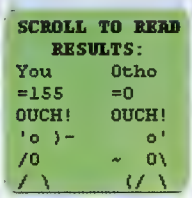
The Games Played in the USA

Using the WAP standard

Although it's nothing compared to the fancy-pants stuff in Europe and Japan, wireless gaming is already making waves in the good ol' U.S. of A. Now don't expect spectacular graphics—these WAP-based titles load on your Web-ready cell phone one screen at a time. Also note that not every network provider (Sprint PCS, AT&T, etc.) offers all these games. For some, you may need to log onto their sites through your phone's Web browser to access their WAP titles.

Gladiator
JAMDAT Mobile



No Russell Crowe here—just stick figures wielding ASCII-character swords, bows and maces in this simple game, one of the most popular titles on the Sprint PCS network. Pick your fighter's class, give him a weapon, and pit him against thousands of other online players. It's a regular ensticklopedia of Roman warfare!

Void Raider
Unplugged Games

War has once again reared its ugly head in space, and as a privateer aligned with one of the two major powers, you're trying to make it last as long as possible. While keeping your crew hardy and happy, you'll be traversing the stars, running escort missions and raids while trying to raise your rank all the way to Fleet Admiral. Click on the "How to find Void Raider" link at www.ungames.com/tmpl.php/games/vr for info on playing the game on your phone.

Sorcery
Digital Bridges

It's a standard role-playing game, based on the old book series by unplugged game guru Steve Jackson. (If you were addicted to Fighting Fantasy and all the other RPG books of the '80s, then welcome home!) The land of Shamutanti is yours to romp about in, as you whip enemies in turn-based battles and select your next path from an on-screen menu. Go to www.wirelessgames.com and click on the phone guide to see if your wireless provider offers the game.

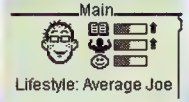
War 3D
Midas Mobile

One of the first 3D cell-phone games available on this side of the world, War 3D has you driving a tank through a monochrome desert, blasting away at enemy targets and searching for the opposition's base. Run out of ammo or shield strength and you've failed your country. All the graphics are generated on Midas' servers, meaning the game's compatible with pretty much any WAP phone. Log on www.wapomanic.com with your phone's browser to play (and note that you'll have to pay whatever per-minute fee your network charges for online time).

Lifestylers
Picofun

Options

After picking one of 10 different character types, you bop around a virtual city and interact with other human players in real time. Depending on the actions you perform on others (and their responses), your personality stats go up and down; the object is to make it to the high score listings for each trait. Will you be the top Casanova or just a big geek like in real life? Check www.picofun.com/lsweb for availability info.



DataClash
nGame

Options

Proving just how far you can take basic dice rolling and still keep it fun, DataClash is a hacking sim in the classic cyberpunk style. Build up a suite of attack programs and start bombarding other users with your cunning setup, but make sure your defenses are just as well-equipped, or you might get hacked and take a blow to your online cred. Hack into www.dataclash.com for info.

Options

Try before you buy: Want an idea of how these WAP games play but you don't want to waste expensive online time on your phone? Log on to www.wapomanic.com with your PC and try their virtual WAP simulator. The games may not be all that impressive yet, but they're getting better.

Played in JAPAN

Using i-mode and i-appli

To see what lies ahead for cell-phone games in the U.S., you gotta look to Japan, where big-name developers have embraced the i-mode and i-appli standards with gusto and made games much flashier than the WAP stuff we can play over here. Once the handset manufacturers and network providers settle on a U.S. standard, we'll be dialing up games like these...

Pac-Man

Namco

You can't call i-appli a game platform until good ol' Pac-Man gets ported to it. You'll need a microscope to see which way the ghosts are headed, but at least it doesn't scroll like the original Game Boy version does. Namco has ported the classic Galaxian to cell phones too, along with a set of Vegas gambling sims.

Space Harrier

Sega

Anyone over 20 has probably played this. You're the Harrier himself, a strapping blond boy who can fly, as he hurtles across a checkerboard landscape and blasts away at a menagerie of surreal monsters. This i-appli version isn't a bad port at all, although the 3D graphics lack the arcade version's force on such a small screen. Sega also has versions of OutRun, Fantasy Zone and even Samba de Amigo available.

Robo*Robo

Cybird

Communicating with actual people is too messy. Why not bring up a cute little 'bot instead? All you have to do is talk to it now and then, answering any questions it might ask you. After a while, once your conversation partner knows enough about you, you'll be able to interact with other Robo*Robos and their real-life masters. It could all lead to a beautiful relationship...or a restraining order.

Dance Dance Revolution

Konami

It's been ported to every other Japanese system, so why not Japanese phones, too? The simple gameplay's true to the original: You follow the on-screen arrows and try to keep in rhythm with the tune. The music sounds much better than you'd think (thanks to the power of i-mode), and if you do well enough it's off to the nationwide high-score table with you.

Resident Evil: Zombie Buster

Capcom

Capcom has jumped on the i-mode bandwagon big time, porting all its key franchises to Japanese cell phones. For starters, take this Resident Evil title, a simple shoot-'em-up version of the survival-horror classic. Or you can download an RE-themed watch for your phone's screen if you don't want to play. Japanese gamers can also choose from simple i-mode versions of Street Fighter, 1943, Ghosts 'n' Goblins and Mega Man.

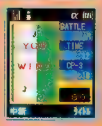
Li'l Ghosts 'n' Goblins

Ryu's Tile Breaking

Battle Gear

Taito

Wouldn't it be cool if there was a fast overhead racer like Super Sprint of yore, with a set of Gran Turismo-like customization options to fiddle with in your spare time? Battle Gear offers all that and real-time multiplayer battles to boot. You can even set up your own face icon and battle message (for example, "My '73 AMC Gremlin'll rock your world!").



Heartless

Can't tell the difference between Crystal Dynamics' blood brothers Kain and Raziel? Fear not: We interview the two vampires* and expose the jugular of their new Blood Omen and Soul Reaver sequels...

by Jonathan Dudlak

* Editor's Note: Our vampire interviews were not endorsed by Eidos nor Crystal Dynamics. We made them up based on official Nosgoth mythos.

KAIN

See me in:
Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2, due on the PlayStation 2 in November

Current Residence:
Nosgoth, near the pillar district

Hobbies:
Mostly sucking blood and ruining people's lives in general. I've been looking to scale back for my latest work, though—just kind of lurk in the shadows and keep a lower profile but then really go all out when it comes time for a meal or thrill kill.

Greatest Life-Altering Experience:
Getting murdered—that changed everything for me. See, I was once a nobleman with a promising future. Unbeknownst to me, however, I was destined to succeed some chick named Ariel as the Pillar of Balance and protector of Nosgoth. The original Pillars became corrupted, though, so my death was orchestrated by Mortanius (necromancer and last surviving member of the original Circle of Nine) so that a new successor might be chosen to cleanse the Circle. Following my death, Mortanius needed a pawn to hunt down and kill the nine existing Pillars of Nosgoth, so he revived me as a vampire and tricked me into complying. What choice did I have? When I had finally done Mortanius's bidding, Ariel begged me to sacrifice myself so that Nosgoth may be cleansed. I said nuts to that and decided instead to begin my quest as supreme ruler of the world. So far, it's working out, but someone has stolen the Soul Reaver. I'm making its recovery the focus of my next project.

The last good movie I saw was:
Interview With The Vampire, despite its factual inaccuracies and pretty-boy stars

People Who Knew Me From Blood Omen Thought I Was:
Kind of a royal pain in the neck, killing scores of innocents and all...

Three Words That Best Describe Me:
Ruler of Nosgoth. That has a nice ring to it, don't you think?

And Soul

RAZIEL

See me in:
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2 for the PS2, due out in September

Current Residence:
I move around Nosgoth a lot.

Hobbies:
Ingesting the souls of my prey to sustain my life force in the material realm has been my bag lately. Throughout my first PS1 project, Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, I was really into moving blocks, but I'm looking to get into some tougher puzzles for my next work. I'm also getting to know the Soul Reaver sword a little better and hope to master some new abilities with it for the sequel. I think you mortals will like that.

Greatest Life-Altering Experience:
That'd have to be when Kain cast me into the abyss centuries ago. I wasn't always such a mess you know. I was once one of the Sarafan Knights formed by Nosgoth's protectors, the Circle of Nine, to hunt down and kill the land's vampires during the Vampire Purges. After I died, Kain revived my Sarafan brothers and me to work as his blood-sucking minions while he established his rule over the nine pillars of Nosgoth. Well, long story short, I grew wings, Kain got jealous and banished me to the depths of the abyss, where I remained for a loooong time. Eventually, I was awakened in this decaying state to pursue my nemesis and end his tyranny, and as you can see, it's still a work in progress. But the fringe benefits are topnotch: All the souls I can suck.

The last good movie I saw was:
I promised fellow Eidos character Lara I'd go see her in *Tomb Raider*. It was...great! Yeah.

People Who Knew Me From Soul Reaver Thought I Was:
Working out some sexual tension—you know, with all that impaling with long spears. It's really just a coincidence.

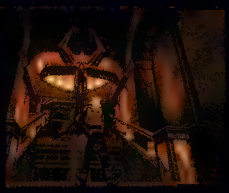
Three Words That Best Describe Me:
Sick of Kain

Raziel encounters the dangerous and highly elusive Horn-Mulleted Bandersnatch

Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2

Tactical Bloodletting Action

Kain can suck the deer ticks off a coon hound at 500 yards; getting blood out of a human ain't no thing.



We're no scientician, but our best estimates reveal that 175,000 man-hours were lost waiting through Blood Omen load times on the PS1 back in the day. But if people were willing to sit through idle screens for an eternity just to find out what was around the next pillar of Nosgoth, you can bet they'll want to check out this speedier sequel on PS2, due in November. Chronicling the life of Kain some 200 years after Blood Omen (that's still a good while before the original Soul Reaver), Blood Omen 2 has Kain tracking down the stolen Soul Reaver sword over several action-adventure missions. "It's fair to say that, in terms of gameplay, Blood Omen 2 lies somewhere between Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain and Soul Reaver," says lead designer Mike Ellis, who previously worked on Psygnosis' Colony Wars series. "Blood Omen 2 is much more combat-oriented than Soul Reaver, which is more puzzle-focused." In fact, both games are being handled by entirely different teams at developer Crystal Dynamics.

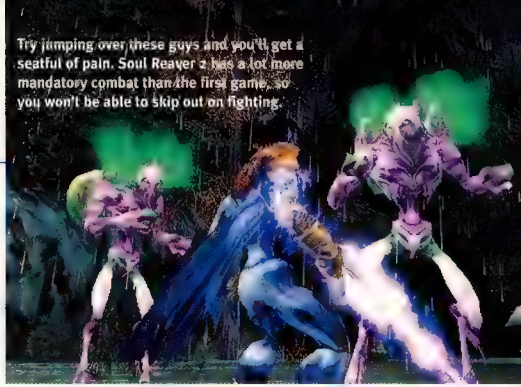
It's true—we sat down to play the game in progress and were pleasantly surprised with the variety of combat moves and stealth-dependent gameplay. If you thought the blood gout in Legacy of Kain was graphic, you're sure to be floored by Kain's brand of open-heart surgery and skillful head removal. Ellis elaborates: "Blood Omen 2's combat system features a unique set of attacks per weapon, including a combo, stealth kills, grab attacks, a charge move and a ground attack. There is also location-based blocking which sees the defender actually meet the attacker at an interception point, rather than hold a static block frame regardless of the incoming attack's location."

Speaking of stealth kills, we've been hearing a lot about BO2's stealth mode, so we decided to see exactly how Crystal Dynamics implemented such an ambitious feature. The catch is you can only activate your stealth tricks when you come to a location with thick fog covering the ground. It's a tad limiting, since you can't slip in and out of this mode anywhere you please, but it's still a cool gameplay idea. While stealthy, you can sneak up on enemies and innocents, relieving them of excess blood or simply offing 'em in the style of your choosing. Stealth mode is just one of Kain's special skills. He'll also master mind control, extended super-jumps, and a handy little number that makes his target spontaneously combust. The Nosgoth sanitation department loves that one.

While much deeper than its RPG-ish father, Blood Omen 2 will still be centered on action and adventure gameplay rather than puzzles. As the player, you'll be given a lot of options as far as exercising your vampiric powers. "Just how nasty Kain is in Blood Omen 2 depends on how the player wishes to play him," muses Ellis. "It's not necessary to terrify a poor peasant woman and then stalk her as she flees. But I'm sure some players will destroy everything in Kain's path." Nah, we don't know anyone like that...

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2

Nosgoth for the Thinking Man


Try jumping over these guys and you'll get a seatful of pain. Soul Reaver 2 has a lot more mandatory combat than the first game, so you won't be able to skip out on fighting.

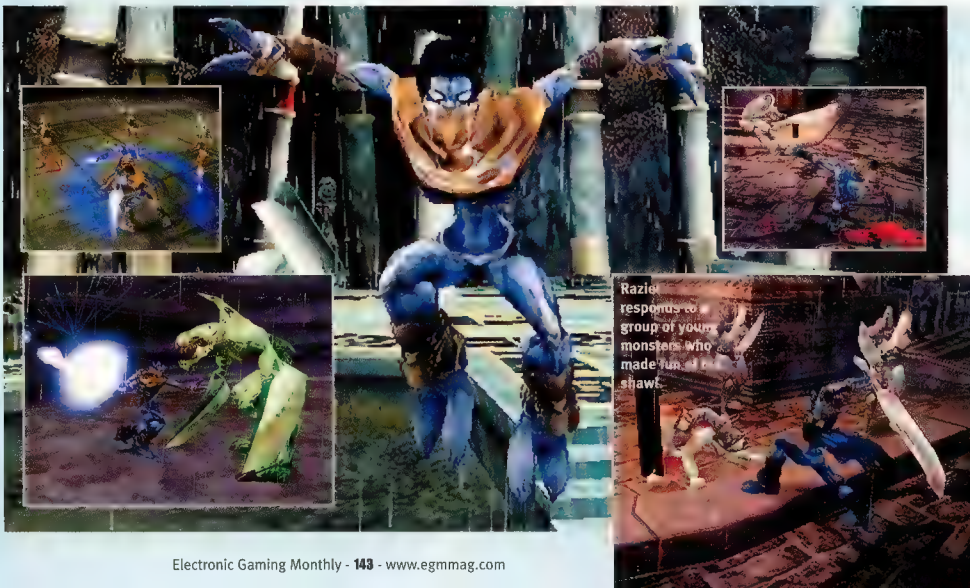
People were P.O.'ed when Soul Reaver 2 on Dreamcast was cancelled. We're talking petitioning, angry letters and just all around being vocally pissed. While the ranting and raving haven't resurrected Raziel on the DC, it's certainly shown just how important this title is to gamers everywhere. Now that PlayStation 2 is the sole means of conveyance for SR2, we may find DC owners begrudgingly purchasing PS2s when the game hits in September to fill the void that Soul Reaver's craptacular ending left behind. "I think the one big feature that fans are waiting for is the story," says Andrew Bennett, executive producer of the Legacy of Kain series. "Soul Reaver 2's storyline has a couple of those 'oh wow' moments where the story elements from all the previous Legacy of Kain games will fall into place for the player." Really? Well, sign us up—Nosgoth's back story thus far holds water like a sieve, and we're eager to find out what's patching the holes.

The story wasn't the only thing that left folks hanging in the original Soul Reaver, though. Halfway through the game, players grew tired of shoving blocks around to solve redundant puzzles. Sensitive to SR's gameplay shortcomings, the team promises to try a little harder this time to make Raziel more fun to work with. "The programming team has spent a great deal of time improving Raziel's object-interaction behaviors, allowing us to create unique contextual, lock-and-key-type puzzles," Bennett continues. "Any object can be flagged as a 'lock' and any other object as a 'key.' In its simplest form, the key may be an object won from an enemy which allows Raziel to open a door...or as unique as a heart-stone which must be returned to the chest cavity of a sacrificial victim, thus awakening a nearby stone idol."

Bennett and the team plan to plant some of these key items on enemies along the way, thereby forcing Raziel to defeat them before he can move along to a new area. So does this mean Crystal Dynamics is revamping the combat model? Hell's yeah. Remember all those times you just didn't feel like fighting one of Nosgoth's periodic demon sentries, worried that taking one hit would make you lose your precious Soul Reaver? You just jumped over them, didn't you? Well, big man, you'll have a lot more incentive to fight during Soul Reaver 2. "We're making the combat itself more enjoyable with many more attacks, defenses, weapons and fatalities," says Bennett. "We're also adding more areas where the player has to clear all the enemies before a door or other blockage is lifted."

Earning new abilities by defeating your Sarafan brethren not only let you progress through the original Soul Reaver's world, it also gave you access to cool, non-essential areas and new ways to off baddies. The personal upgrades you receive in SR2 are inspired by the same ideas, but they're mostly channeled through elemental upgrades to your Soul Reaver sword. Certain earned elemental attributes are required for gameplay progression, but they'll also assist you in combat, so you'll have to choose which ability to use for every situation.

Just as in Blood Omen 2, the Soul Reaver weapon has become the focal point of this sequel. Crystal Dynamics plans to continue the series for as long as gamers stay interested, so maybe we will see some crossing plot lines within both of these games by way of this significant sword. Let's just hope for a proper ending this time.


Raziel responds to a group of young monsters who made fun of his shawl.

Review Crew

Our Philosophy

EGM rates games based on how they compare with other titles on the same system. The highest score we'll give a game is a 10. When a game receives a 10, you can rest assured it's one of the best games ever made—a revolutionary title that truly stands above everything else in its genre for its time. At the other end of the spectrum sits the lowest score a game can receive: a 0.0. This is the kind of game you want to avoid at all costs. It's pure crap. In the middle lies the average grade, 5.0. We repeat: 5.0 IS AVERAGE. Simple, ain't it?

10 9 8 7 6 **5** 4 3 2 1 0

Game of the Month

Madden NFL 2002 (PS2) pg. 146

Was there ever any doubt [illegible] football would come roaring back to prominence? Sure, NFL 2K2 had it on the ropes, but thanks to improved greasy-fast gameplay and the best computer AI we've ever experienced, everything is right in Maddenville.

Our Awards

Platinum Awards go to games that get all 10's, the best and rarest review a game can get.

Gold Awards go to games whose average score equals 9.0 or higher.

Games that average at least an 8.0 (but lower than 9.0) receive **Silver Awards.**

The Crew

Illustrations by Norm "Hsu and Chan" Scott

Crispin Boyer
Features Editor

Now that he's 30, we think Cris is too old for *EGM*. "No way," he says. "I still break dance to Insane Clown College or whatever they're called, just like the young people. Now let me solve my game tapes in peace!"

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure
Current Faves: Mario Kart: Super Circuit

Dan "Shoe" Hsu
Editor in Chief

Shoe recently decided that *Dude, Where's My Car?* is the funniest movie in movie history (next to *Deliverance*). He'll now use the DVD to cheer him up whenever his online SegaNet games are lagging.

Favorite Genres: Pretty much anything
Current Faves: Multiplayer stuff on SegaNet

Mark MacDonald
Executive Editor

Is Mark's timing right? Did you save your love for him tonight? 'Cause he is *hot blooded*, check it and see. Got a fever of 103. C'mon baby, do you do more than dance? Mark's hot blooded, he's hot blooded.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, RPG
Current Faves: Advance Wars, Ka, Piposaru 2001

Che Chou
West Coast Editor

Lactose intolerant? That's OK! Che has discovered the joys of soy cheese, and yummm, pizza is back in the house. All he needs now is the *Mr. Show* DVD box and he's all set. "Dude! Suck that s---!"

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Racing, RPG
Current Faves: GTA3, Maximo, Max Payne (PC)

Chris Johnston
News Editor

Legions of the undead have taken over Racoon City, and Chris is the only one left alive. He's not battlin' zombies, though—he's alone in his apartment, playing Dance Dance Revolution with the music cranked.

Favorite Genres: Adventure, Puzzle, Music
Current Faves: Ooga Booga, DDR 5th Mix

James Mielke
West Coast Editor/Webnaut

Caught between a Dante and a hard place, Milky May Cry tears of joy as he lays his Dreamcast to rest and prepares to play all the wicked cool PS2 games coming out this fall. Can you hear the gentle weeping?

Favorite Genres: Home Cookin', RPG, Fighting
Current Faves: Devil May Cry, Maximo, Ico

Jonathan Dudlak
Associate Editor

After taking a lot of backlash for ragging on *Sum 41* in a review, Jon would like to say that he doesn't hate punk bands. Quite the contrary. He's actually just a lot more hardcore than you boys. Bring it on!

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Adventure, Action
Current Faves: Super Street Fighter II GBA

Jeanne Kim
Associate Editor/Art Director

Jeasse can't wait 'til Halloween! Jack-o'-lanterns, sweets and days before the bloody console war hits. No doubt she'll be perched in the rafters waiting to feast on all the rolling heads! Come here my pretty!

Favorite Genres: RPG, Action, Adventure
Current Faves: Pokémon Crystal

Greg Sewart
Previews Editor

Captain Canada says always eat your vegetables, say your prayers, keep your stick on the ice and never, ever taunt a rabid beaver. Even though they look cuddly, they're not. Seriously. We're not kidding.

Favorite Genres: Racing, RPG, Action
Current Faves: GT3, Final Fantasy (NES)

Team EGM

These are the sports nuts on the Crew, but that doesn't mean they're not into all types of games. It just means you can be sure that sports reviews are being done by the sports enthusiasts and not by some schmucks.

Dean Hager
Managing Editor

Dean couldn't be happier now that he's won the inter-office NCAA Football tournament. What's next for coach and his Huskers? Recruit, regroup and start another dominating run to the championship.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Racing
Current Faves: NCAA 2002, Le Mans 24 Hours

Kraig Kujawa
Senior Associate Editor

Kraig's kicking himself for having such a crappy kicker on his NCAA team, the Texas A&M Aggies. Next year he's going to recruit the biggest, baddest cannon leg he can find, football player or not.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Action, Adventure
Current Faves: Madden NFL 2002

Dan Leahy
Editor in Chief, *Expert Gamer*

Could things get much worse for Hossman? Nebraska beats his hide, WSB 2K2 isn't very good, and now he sees that he's not too sports-like in the drawing to the left. Somebody's gonna pay.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Action
Current Faves: NCAA 2002, Madden 2002

Armored Core 2: Another Age

Publisher:	Agetec
Developer:	From Software
Also Try:	Gungriffon Blaze
Players:	1-2
Supports:	i.LINK, USB Mouse
Best Feature:	Tweaking options galore
Worst Feature:	Stiff control
Web Site:	www.agetec.com

I'm sure that at some point in the distant future, perhaps when giant mechs slug it out in real life, From Software will perfect this series—but it certainly hasn't happened with AC2: Another Age. **More of an expansion pack for the PS2 prequel than a true sequel** (you can even use up your old 'bots), this fifth installment in the franchise comes with control tweaks, more missions and...well, that's about it. Finally, the developers stepped out of the Stone Age and supported the analog stick. Funny thing: You still don't get true analog control (your robot waddles at the same speed regardless of how far you twiddle your stick), and turning is a painfully slow procedure, even with top-of-the-line mech parts. So, once again, it's these upgrades—the vast assortment of mech-tweaking options—that are the best things here. Agetec claims you can build a ludicrous 10 billion combinations of mech parts and custom paint jobs. I was just pleased to see better mission variety. Sure, the story is nonexistent, your mech handles like a 100-ton garbage truck, and it's nearly impossible to dodge enemy fire, but strangely enough I still felt compelled to get to that next mission and build up my 'bot. You even get a few cooperative sorties for split-screen play. Agetec did nix the Japanese version's online mode, but you'd have to wait until the PS2 network adapter hits this November to access that feature anyway, so no big whup. **Crispin**

It may be called Another Age, but as far as I'm concerned, Armored Core has been stuck in time ever since it appeared on the original PS1. They *finally* added analog stick support (welcome to 1998!) but the controls still feel clunky and slow. It gets better once you soup up your robot but still, it's annoying. As always, building and customizing your mech down to the tiny details is great, but when that's more fun than actually taking it out into battle, we've got a problem. With responsive controls like Z.O.E, this series could really go somewhere. As is, **Another Age is for Core heads only**, and even some of them will be disappointed with more of the same. **Mark**

The kid in me makes me want to like big ol' robot bashin', but I couldn't bring myself to enjoy this one. **AC is becoming less of a game and more of a robot tune-up sim.** The depth of the customization is amazing...almost intimidating. Shame the gameplay is so remarkably shallow. After juicing up your mech, you run around in unimaginative, low-detail arenas that would look more at home on a PS1. It's hard to aim and dodge, and battles often degrade into a war of attrition with little technique. Why bother modifying your robot if you can't have fun with it? Maybe they should just dump the annoying "battles" altogether and call this Big Fancy Robot Maker. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	4	2	5

Extermination

Publisher:	Sony CEA
Developer:	Deep Space
Featured In:	*EGM* #143
Players:	1
Also Try:	Resident Evil Code: Veronica X
Best Feature:	Wide range of moves
Worst Feature:	Boring storyline
Web Site:	www.scea.com

On the one hand, Extermination's got all the survival-horror clichés: **a cheezy plot, ho-hum voice acting, ammo, notes and healing items scattered about, guarded by horribly mutated soldiers and dogs** (the victims of an experiment gone horribly wrong, naturally). Fortunately it's got some redeeming values that separate it from your average shoddy Resident Evil clone: a large, almost Tomb Raider-size set of moves (you can swing, crawl, roll, jump, climb and more), an "infection" meter in addition to your normal health bar, and pleasingly creepy dark areas you need to use a flashlight to see and aim in. Problem is the game never takes true advantage of these assets, using them only sparingly, and falling back on the tried-and-true "figure out how to open the next door" formula all too often. Another disappointment is the enemies; there are only a few different types, and they're all way too easy to simply run around (with no real incentive to ever fight them). Graphics are mixed: A few places, like the outdoor snowstorm scenes and fleshy mutated rooms, look cool and convincing, but most of the game is rather plain, especially next to other recent second-generation PS2 titles. Overall, Extermination isn't horrible by any means, it's just not particularly great either. With Code: Veronica X out there and Devil May Cry on the way, I can't recommend it as more than a rental for fans of the genre. **Mark**

Extermination dips elbow deep into a vat of sci-fi clichés and slaps together a decent (if predictable) adventure. While **the game won't win any awards for originality**, it is well-paced and does a good job of keeping the player glued to the tube. But what holds Extermination back from being a true contender is the obscurity of some of the puzzles. You don't ever feel like you're overcoming obstacles due to ingenious level design or your tenacity for exploration. In this fully 3D environment, you can occasionally go where you please, but more often than not, any paths are unnecessarily indirect and complex. Still, not bad for a weekend rental. **Che**

Mutant Marines, virus-spitting tadpoles and *Aliens* interior decor all serve to tingle gamers' spines in Extermination, but the real terror literally lies right under one's nose. Demon controls! These heinous torture tools will enrage Gandhi-patient gamers. Try shooting down multi-attacking bloodsuckers in third-person with the behind-the-back camera view; get used to getting mauled while being forced to stand still to shoot; and expect to kill mucho gaming sessions (not infectoids) with a completely ineffect-oid auto-aim. Still, the controls are at least good for one thing: running—something you will be doing a lot of to survive. **Treadmill-simulator anyone?** **Jeanne**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	4	4

Le Mans 24 Hours

Publisher:	Infogrames
Developer:	Infogrames Melbourne House
Featured In:	*EGM* #141
Players:	1-2
Also On:	Dreamcast
Best Feature:	Loads of races to compete in
Worst Feature:	The Dreamcast did this better
Web Site:	www.infogrames.com

I'd be more excited about this updated version of Le Mans had I not played the crap out of its Dreamcast counterpart a year ago. Unfortunately, a few new cars and the addition of a Road Atlanta track don't make what is essentially the same game worth buying all over again. Of course, if you never owned or played the Dreamcast version, you'll find lots to like here. Cool arcade racing mixed with just the right amount of sim elements (dealing with tire wear, different weather conditions, pit strategy, etc.) will keep you up well past your bedtime many a night as you work to earn every trophy in the game. Insomniacs will even get their money's worth with not one, but two multi-hour endurance races (10 hours at Road Atlanta and the 24 hours of Le Mans). It's like a racing RPG! For those of you who just dirtied your pants, take heart; you can save your progress every time you make a pit stop. All in all, Le Mans is a really solid product that, while a tad dated, still stands as one of the best racing games out there. Bearing that in mind, however, I am a little disappointed that Me.bourne House didn't try harder when they converted Le Mans to the PS2. The textures on the track surface are muddy and tend to glitch out every few hundred feet, causing pavement lines to disappear. The whole game suffers from some major shimmering effects, too. Nonetheless, **buy this game if you can't get the Dreamcast version.** **Greg**

Sadly this pup isn't as smokin' fast as the Dreamcast version. The graphics aren't as sharp either. On top of that, two-player split-screen is grainy-looking and occasionally slows down. But don't stop reading just yet! While it may not be phenomenal (like its DC brother), it's still mighty tasty. The vehicle physics feel just right. I've never actually driven an open-cockpit prototype racer, but I truly believe this game (both versions) is the next best thing. It's unreal. You can almost feel your stomach drop as you fly over the hills at top speed (the in-car view is best to use). **If you're too impatient to tackle the monstrous GT3, Le Mans 24 Hours is a great alternative.** **Dean**

One of last year's best DC racers makes its way to the PS2 with ho-hum results. The sublime visuals from the DC original basically arrive intact; however, a few graphical discrepancies keep the PS2 version from looking totally polished. Nice graphics aside, the real strength of Le Mans lies in its **superb controls and physics**, a well-balanced system that walks the fine line between realism and fun. Luckily, taking corners with the Dual Shock 2 feels just as good, if not better, than the DC controller. Tackling one of them iron man endurance sessions gives you an immense sense of accomplishment, something only rivaled by games like Gran Turismo 3. **Che**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	2	8

Madden NFL 2002

Publisher:	Electronic Arts
Developer:	EA Tiburon
Featured In:	*EGM* #146
Players:	1-8
Supports:	Multi-tap
Best Feature:	Team customization
Worst Feature:	Madden's lethargic commentary
Web Site:	www.ea.com

I've always wanted a football game that lets me choose the stripes on my players' socks, and thanks to Madden, my dreams have come true. Hell, I can even color them flaming pink. After wasting a day accessorizing my players, I took my newfound day-glo team to the gridiron where they (and their pink socks) got the crap knocked out of them by the Ravens. It didn't have anything to do with their cheeky uniforms, but rather the game's realism. In fact, I've never had so much trouble scoring touchdowns in a video game as I did with this one. After many failed drives, I tried using my Madden 2001 money plays to no avail. In the fourth quarter I resorted to long bombs and twitch skills to break a long gainer or two, but that landed me a 28-14 defeat on the tough, but fair All-Pro mode. I realized, to win, I have to dig in my heels and use my head. I moved motion men to strengthen blocking, overloaded coverages with receivers, and kept the defense honest with balanced play calling. You know, genuine football strategy. (If that jargon makes your head spin, don't worry. A slick tutorial mode explains strategy, and you earn bonuses for learning. If that doesn't help, well, there's always the arcadey Rookie mode.) The point is, there's something for everyone at no expense to the gameplay. Madden 2002 is so deep, so gorgeous, so realistic and (finally) so fast, every football fan should own it. **Kraig**

Madden 2002 is chock-full of amazement. I can't begin to describe the number of replays which leave me slackjawed due to the astounding AI. Watch and grin as defensive players jump the hot route or jam your primary receiver at the line. On offense, receiving, downfield blocking and line play have been ramped up significantly. Outside runs are still tough as nails, but maybe I'm just a lousy coach (naww). **Once you get past gameplay which is deeper than a black hole, you'll find an endless list of options and features.** Franchise mode features league realignment (Houston Texans) and a better salary-cap structure. Stellar stuff for sure. **Dan L.**

Rather than a simple roster upgrade, Tiburon actually did something that improves Madden in a useful way: They made it faster. **Hardly a minor tweak, the peppy new speed makes all the difference in the world.** Receivers no longer meander down field waiting for a high-arcing pass to slowly float back to earth. Now it's all speed and timing, like it should be. The revamped AI is equally impressive. If you don't know what you're doing, the computer will slice you up good (even on the easier difficulty settings). It'll be interesting to see how NFL 2K2 responds to the pressure now that Madden is back in full glory. Go forth and buy immediately. **Dean**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	7	7	10

Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open

Publisher:	Infogrames
Developer:	Angel Studios
Featured In:	*EGM* #141
Players:	1-2
Also try:	Smuggler's Run
Best Feature:	Bitchin' trucks
Worst Feature:	Dirty racing
Web Site:	www.infogrames.com

For those of you who are excited about driving brand-name trucks, Wide Open will definitely get your heart pumping. Angel Studios did a great job of modeling the Hummers, Jeeps, Fords and Chevies...they look beefy and ready to tackle any terrain. In the later stages, modifications make them even more menacing. It's amazing what a set of big tires and fog lights will do to a truck. I couldn't be happier with that part of the game. I also dig the vehicle physics. The stuff that happens is far-fetched (running up mountains, falling off cliffs, etc.), but it sure looks cool. When it comes to the racing, the early stages are fine. The tracks are easy to follow and the AI vehicles, for the most part, behave like little gentlemen. It's clean and competitive all the way. It's also worth mentioning that the field stays fairly close together—that's a big plus. It wasn't until the later rounds that I felt a letdown. Instead of each division getting progressively faster (like you'd expect in a racing game), the speeds stay generally the same. **To compensate, the tracks get harder to follow and the AI racers become aggressive and nasty.** I don't know how many times I was set to win a race only to be spun around in the last stretch by some jerk. That's cheap! I'd rather win with speed and finesse than by running other drivers off the road. That's my only knock on an otherwise decent game. If you're OK with that, you might like it. If not, look elsewhere. **Dean**

WO makes me wonder if Angel Studios is a one-trick pony. It's Smuggler's Run all over again, right down to the textures, buildings and foliage on each course. I could forgive the boring graphics, though, if the racing was fast and fun. Alas, no such luck. Any excitement provided by this game becomes frustration as your computer opponents go out of their way to spin you at every opportunity. You wouldn't think a Jeep could take out a Hummer so easily, but that's exactly how I lost many a race in Wide Open. I don't care how "arcadey" the game is supposed to be. If it's this frustrating, **it ain't worth a purchase.** Wait for Smuggler's Run 2. **Greg**

Sometimes off-roading games get caught up in realism and forget what makes them fun. Wide-Open shuns the ultra-realistic mumbo-jumbo to deliver a rugged adrenaline rush that anyone can hop right into. **What it lacks in grease-monkey fodder is easily trumped by its roller-coaster thrills and gorgeous visuals.** A Ford F-150 can't survive a 100-foot drop from a waterfall in real life, but here, it's par for the course and made me wet my pants on the way down, especially in first-person mode. With falls like that, it's disappointing that the trucks drive away without a ding. After all, beating a Hummer to a pulp would have been the icing on the cake. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	4	7

Time Crisis 2

Publisher:	Namco
Developer:	Namco
Featured In:	*EGM* #145
Players:	1-2
Supports:	Guncon 2, Guncon 1, i.LINK
Best Feature:	Shooting bad mans is fun
Worst Feature:	Very short
Web Site:	www.namco.com

It's nice to see, in our politically hyper-sensitive climate, that a company like Namco can "stick to their guns" and continue to release what has long been a staple of video gaming, light-gun shooters. A much better follow-up to the original than Project Titan for the PS1 was, Time Crisis 2 is a simple, yet fast-paced precision-based blaster that's a short but sweet arcadey pleasure. If you play with a friend in split-screen (or in the far superior i.LINK mode, which requires two TVs, two copies of the game and two PS2s), the game is great fun. If you're relying on your CPU ally, you'll have to forgive him for being a crap shot. The responsive Guncon 2 (or regular Dual Shock pad) feels great, while offering extra buttons to use for ducking and reloading. (Getting the Guncon 2 to work with S-video requires a special attachment, by the way.) Where TC2 falls short: The backgrounds aren't interactive enough (see Namco's arcade title Crisis Zone for interactivity!), there's little reward given for making extra-difficult shots, and there are next to no power-ups aside from the occasional machine gun offered for use in boss fights. With TC2 being three levels long, even the additional modes aren't enough to make this game last much longer than a few plays through. Time Crisis 2 will be fun to pull out of the closet every now and then, but **anyone looking for a great value better rent this one before investing in a purchase.** **Milkman**

Move over *Lethal Weapon*, a new action-buddy flick is in town. TC2 is a unique game for two reasons: You team up with a computer or a human teammate (via split-screen) to blast thousands into oblivion, and both characters look like idiots and wear "trendy" denim jackets. The only things missing are the mullets. If you play alongside the computer, you'll laugh at the "help" he gives you. It mostly consists of him serving as gunfodder and you bailing him out of trouble. Even though that's not legitimate teamwork, it still is interesting. This novelty and the old-school mini-games offer a lot to do in a game that is sure to delight NRA members. **Kraig**

From the mightiest pharaoh to the lowliest peasant, who doesn't enjoy a good light-gun game? **Top three reasons why this one is better than most**: 3) TC2 rewards you for playing. Earn "continue" credits, new games and more. Many arcade-to-home light-gun titles don't give you squat. 2) Mini-games that look like they've come from the way-cool Point Blank series (Namco's other, more lighthearted gun game). 1) Of course, the two-player cooperative play. Forget about doing this game with the CPU. Grab a friend and play this disc the way it's meant to be played. Seeing your partner on the screen working with you adds mucho fun to this style of game. **Shoe**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	6	7

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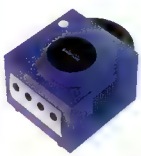


Ephemeral Fantasia

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami CEJ
Players: 1
Supports: Guitar Freaks controller (import)
Web Site: www.konami.com

Worst Feature: Load times are nasty
Worser Feature: Navigating is nearly impossible

My head is pounding. Could the plucktastic soundtrack composed by Zamfir and his Mighty Flutepeckers be the cause? Or might it be the tepid time-traveling plot that is causing my neck muscles to contort in Vulcan death-grip style? I think it might be the horrid translation that is not only lacking strength and integrity, but is also filled with grammatical pitfalls Carl Lewis couldn't jump. Where's my aspirin? The mini-games and such are nice distractions from the rudimentary battle system, and some incorporate the use of Konami's Guitar Freaks controller (only available as an import). But the scale of the town maps and the repetitive graphics make navigating around the map a laborious chore. And wait 'til you get into fisticuffs with the enemy. It looks like they spent about seven polygons on the whole works, making EF look like a high-res Aidyn Chronicles. The best thing about the game is the triangle button which throws the game into fast-forward. **It's light-hearted fare, which is a relief from the usual D&D, but this is not a very good RPG.**

Milkman

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	5	5	4

Rune: Viking Warlord

Publisher: Take 2
Developer: Human Head Studios
Players: 1
Supports: USB mouse and keyboard
Web Site: www.take2games.com

Best Feature: Ragnar zealously smashes pints of mead after downing them
Worst Feature: Bad-funny AI

Vikings. Gotta love 'em. Tearing mutton right off the bone sans utensils, donning ever-fashionable pelt-and-ram-horn outfits, and never letting the smell of blood leave their nostril hairs, have established Vikings (to some) as the ambassadors for masculinity at its mightiest. Unfortunately, **Rune: VW makes Tim Robbins from *Erik the Viking* look like the hardest Norseman to swing a battle axe.** Expect to laugh out loud when enemies sprint past Ragnar (so he has to run after them), make a U-ey, *then* decide to attack him. Or how about the annoying falling boulders, oversized carp looking for lunch, and turnstiles that remarkably cause instant death. Weapons, albeit plentiful, aren't thrilling to behold or obtain. And cheesy haunted house-style ambient backdrops, as well as voiceovers that come off amateurishly pitched down, not ominously Odin-ish, make one wonder if Human Head's just being facetious. All in all, since it's hard to take R:VW's action or adventure elements seriously, it's snooze city. Shame. Never thought Vikings could be boring.

Jeanne

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	4	2	3

Yanya Caballista City Skater

Publisher: Koei
Developer: Koei
Also Try: Jet Grind Radio (DC)
Players: 1-2
Supports: Finger board (included)
Web Site: www.koeigames.com

Best Feature: It's not another Tony Hawk clone
Worst Feature: That silly board controller. Pitch it!

The Tony Hawk series may rake in mucho dinero here in the States, but in Japan it's much less of a sensation. And that's good news for us: It means the decidedly made-in-Japan Yanya Caballista City Skater is a different kind of skating game. And by "different," I mean "**spectacularly bizarre in a good way.**" For starters, you get a four-inch skateboard gizmo that snugs onto your joypad's analog sticks. Pushing on its tail makes you ollie, leaning forward extends your hangtime, twisting the board spins your skater—you get the drift. The trick and combo system is not as freeform as in Tony's games. Pulling together grabs, spins and kick tricks requires perfect timing, which isn't as user-friendly as THPS's fill-the-buffer-with-tricks system. And, to be honest, I ripped the little skateboard off my pad about 10 minutes into the game: It was just getting in the way. But you get so many cool training and ramp challenges—not to mention the oddball main game that has you performing tricks to bewilder alien invaders—that this game had me hooked from the get-go.

Crispin

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	7	8	8

Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo

Publisher: Bandai
Developer: Bandai
Featured In: *EGM* #136
Players: 1
Web Site: www.bandaigames.com

Best Feature: Incredibly detailed mobile suits
Worst Feature: Sluggish controls, linear levels

I'm frustrated with the reality that Gundam games almost never live up to their anime counterpart. If you're into the old-school stuff like me, then you'll be disappointed to know that **JTJ is only a hollow shell of the landmark 1979 series that started it all.** The game begins promisingly enough; JTJ kicks you to the curb with an incredible CG intro sequence, and then swiftly moves into the complex storyline. But three or four missions into the game, you realize it's all just fan service. The controls are so sluggish and the analog aiming so sensitive, I have to wonder if anybody actually played this game before they slapped a sticker price on it. What's worse, some of the missions are very linear. You spend most of your time prioritizing which baddies you need to cap first, making this a tedious excursion into trial and error. Still, if you're into Gundam, check out the religious attention to detail as they bring to life these classic mech designs. To be sure, JTJ is for hardcore fanboys only. Newcomers wanting a taste of vintage Gundam are better off just watching the DVDs.

Che

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	6	4	3

Silent Scope 2: Dark Silhouette

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami CES
Also try: Time Crisis 2
Players: 1-2
Supports: i.LINK
Web Site: www.konami.com

Best Feature: Cooperative two-character action
Worst Feature: Marginal improvement over the first

Think of Silent Scope 2 as a highbrow Time Crisis 2 and your life will be fine. Demand anything more of this mildly enhanced arcade port, and you'll most likely end up disappointed. The action is tense and keeps your pulse up as the time limit is more strictly enforced than in Namco's shootout. The problem is that 1) the default controls are too touchy, and 2) the enemies are often little more than pixels standing against a pixellated background, making it hard to target the enemy. This could be construed as "challenge," but the game looks so unspectacularly similar to an N64 game at times, you'll wonder if the PS2's graphics chip went on vacation. The way SS2 mixes up the use of night-vision, x-ray scopes and other sniper-gadgets is nifty, but even these guilty pleasures are rudely overshadowed by the wretched voice-acting ("Now let's play Metal Gear for real!") and weak-ass plot. It's not a terribly long game either, but it has enough options to satisfy most purchasers, including a link-up co-op mode that the well-equipped (two TVs, etc.) will enjoy.

Milkman

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	6	5	7

The Last Blade 2: Heart of the Samurai

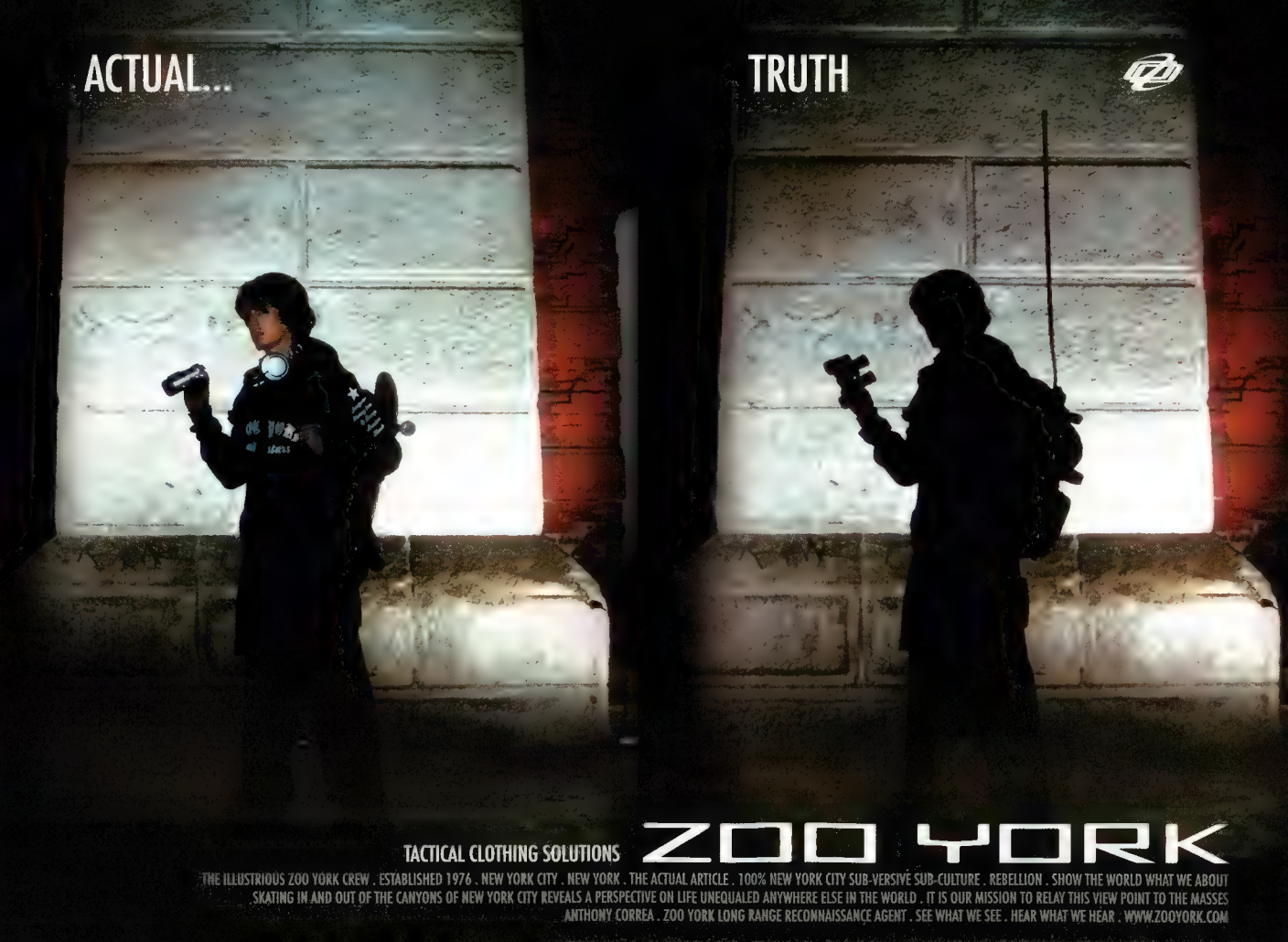
Publisher: Agetec
Developer: SNK
Also On: Neo•Geo CDZ
Players: 1-2
Supports: Jump Pack
Web Site: www.agetec.com

Best Feature: Nostalgia factor
Worst Feature: Sluggish gameplay

One of the best fighting games for the Neo•Geo back in the late '90s, Last Blade 2 is **an excellent compromise between old-school SNK fighters and faster-paced, more fantastic Capcom titles** on the DC today. In typical SNK fashion, the dated yet endearing gameplay features a simple parrying system and is focused on close-range attacks rather than repeated projectile tossing. What I really like about LB2 is the overall style and variety of its characters—it's very much like Samurai Shodown. I spent a long time just experimenting with different weapons and thinking up new ways to use them. While the combat model allows you to develop a few cool combos on your own, don't expect it to rival a game like Street Fighter III for creative latitude. LB2 is more about appearance, with the emphasis on ornate animated backgrounds and guttural Japanese voice acting common to Neo•Geo fighters. If you don't care much for flowery presentation, you probably won't get into LB2 because it's just not as deep as most modern 2D and 3D fighters.

Jonathan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	8	3	7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Alien Front Online

Publisher:	Sega
Developer:	WOW Entertainment
Featured In:	*EGM* #145
Players:	1 (1-8 online)
Supports:	Jump Pack, Wheel, Microphone, SegaNet
Best Feature:	Online play
Worst Feature:	Single-player game
Web Site:	www.sega.com

Let the title of this game give you a big fat hint about its best feature: Alien Front Online is an experience you want to share with others. The solo-player stuff here—the Arcade and Mission modes kept me entertained for a few hours. But after five levels, the the game starts getting damn near impossible. I was ready to play with fellow humans instead of the cheapo computer opponents (and note that you'll need to go online for multiplay, since AFO doesn't offer split-screen modes). Once you're trading shots with up to seven other players online, however, the game earns its stripes. Don't expect the frantic fun of Quake III Arena; even the lightest, swiftest vehicles in AFO move at a plodding pace, and dodging is more a matter of luck than skill. But the big explosions and massive firefights here are gripping and spectacular. **It's even cool just to hang back and watch battles rage from afar.** Aside from standard deathmatch, you get Capture the Flag and a mode called Fortress, which has the alien team assaulting the Army base and vice versa. It all sounds like the same ol' routine until you factor in voice chat over the packed-in microphone. Players' voices often sound garbled and you can only speak in three-second snippets, but being able to shout for help—or just talk smack in real time—still makes for a revolutionary gameplay experience. If nothing else it adds to the chaos, and in this game, the chaos is half the fun. **Crispin**

If Outtrigger's for the twitch/action gamer who's money in the hand-eye coordination department, then **Alien Front Online is for the more casual gaming guy who considers places like GameWorks or Dave & Busters to be "true" arcades.** AFO is just a slow, plodding tank game that's as straightforward as they come. The novelty is there: eight-player online play, voice chat, etc. But they're called "novelties" for a reason, and once you get past them, you're stuck with a simple shoot-'em-up (though if you can regularly play big-group online games with your friends, AFO may be a better value to you than it would be to the gamer without such connections). **Shoe**

Think of AFO's no-frills offline components as more of a practice tutorial for the real battle online, and you may have an easier time justifying your purchase. In eight-player deathmatch, the battles can get pretty fierce. It's just too bad **the gameplay isn't all that spectacular**. With all the revolutionary stuff going on (especially the voice chat) in AFO, the game still falls short of greatness. Plus, I don't think I'm nitpicking when I say that with the popularity of the DC dropping by the day, the omission of a split-screen multiplayer mode is awfully shortsighted. The Fortress and CTF modes help its longevity, but there's just not much here to keep me coming back. **Che**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	7	7

Ooga Booga

Publisher:	Sega
Developer:	Visual Concepts
Featured In:	*EGM* #142
Players:	1-4
Supports:	Jump Pack, SegaNet
Best Feature:	Excellent online multiplayer
Worst Feature:	Not enough game types
Web Site:	www.sega.com

Ooga Booga's as frantic, addictive and fun as getting hopped up on sugar and chasing your friends around a movie theater parking lot—only a lot safer 'cuz there's no traffic. Similar to other multiplayer battle games like Smash Bros. or Bomberman, the one-player game only exists to teach you the basics. Ooga Booga is best played online against three other humans. The character designs are classic and each (including secret characters) has four priceless victory taunts. Whoever wins will give you a live performance, I'm sure. The island levels are small and designed intelligently so the action is always in close quarters. The weapons, animals, tikis and spells are perfectly chosen and keep the gameplay nicely balanced. **Matches almost always come down to the last few seconds, making each game really exciting.** On the down side, it's a shame there are only three game types (Smakahuna, Rodeo and Boar Polo). You can configure every aspect of them, but I wished there was a Capture the Flag mode or other types to choose from. On the Net side of things, it's missing a few features that would've made it even better: The chat interface is clunky; there's no online ranking system that could've been done for fixed-style tournaments; and you can't password-protect games. Ooga's still a great title and one of the DC's last. I hope this isn't the last we see of the Ooga Booga tribes. **Chris**

I'm torn. On the one hand there's OB's online play, which is pretty cool. The different types of games to choose from are good enough to keep me playing casually for at least a few months (or until the online competition starts to fade). On the other hand, as a single-system multiplayer game, I'm not too thrilled with Ooga. I just can't keep up with the action when the screen is split. It gets way too frustrating to search for your opponents on the islands when you don't have a full-screen display. I guess what I'm trying to say is Ooga Booga is a decent enough game if you have a Net connection, but **nothing I'd pay full price for.** **Greg**

I don't care what anyone says about the game's dumb name or primitive graphics. **Me like Ooga Booga.** Sure, it can be frantic and annoying. At times, it's difficult to tell what's going on, and the sound effects can drive you to kill. But once you get the hang of things (make sure you go through the tutorial first and not jump right into multiplayer), you'll find a competitive and addicting game that's full of variety, pep and personality. I even enjoyed playing through the one-player missions because I wanted to open up more goodies/options for multiplay. Note: If you're not planning on playing this with some on- or offline chums, don't even bother. **Shoe**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	5	6	4

Outtrigger

Publisher:	Sega
Developer:	AM2
Featured In:	*EGM* #143
Players:	1-4 (1-6 online)
Supports:	Keyboard, Mouse, SegaNet, Jump Pack
Best Feature:	It's simple and fun
Worst Feature:	The slight lag during online play
Web Site:	www.sega.com

Because of its arcade roots, Outtrigger pales in comparison to Sega's other online murder simulator, Quake III Arena. In almost every category, it falls short. Want more modes, like Capture the Flag? Play Quake III. Want a wider variety of maps? Play Quake III. Want better graphics and sound? Well, you get the idea. I'm not just talking about the major features either. In Outtrigger, you can't completely customize the controls; you have to select one of many preconfiged options (which is bad news for first-person shooter fans who like to use the keyboard/mouse). Also, this game has some slight 56k lag. It's a different type of lag from Quake III's, though. In that excellent game, you can freeze up during inopportune moments. In Outtrigger, you hardly ever stall (which is nice), but the trade-off is you have a slight delay when firing. That means **getting your rockets to smooch your enemies takes a bit of clairvoyance, not accuracy**. So why the good review score? Despite its shortcomings, Outtrigger is still fun to play...multiplayer, that is. (The entire set of one-player missions will take you about an hour.) Split-screen play has no slowdown at all, and online offers six-player support (vs. Q3A's four). Also, the game is simple and straightforward; anyone can get into it, even casual folks who are intimidated by the more hardcore shooters out there. SegaNet's new baby is fun. Just don't expect it to floor you. **Shoe**

Outrigger's like Quake dummied down for the arcade it's got many of the thrills offered by your average first-person shooter (FPS), just simplified. As a single-player experience I had fun with the challenges in Mission mode, and there are a few other cool surprises (ricocheting shots and the ability to see through walls in particular), but **the gameplay and especially the tiny levels are so straightforward** I grew tired of them after a few hours. If you're looking for a split-screen or online deathmatch DC game, Outrigger is a distant third in my book (behind Quake III and Unreal Tournament), but that doesn't mean it's bad, just for more casual FPS fans. **Mark**

Outtrigger's deathmatching'll initially entertain action seekers, but overall, only offers a bit of arcade fun. After trudging through an interface that's got more layers than a granny convention, expect claustrophobic rooms (not big enough to be called levels), online graphical glitches that snuff out any sign a weapon's fired until after the explosion hits, and nonsensically blind free-for-all death, and teammatching that's good for a couple gos, but not much more. **If you're desperate for a shooter that's got absolutely no value other than just plain shooting, Outtrigger fits the bill.** But expect nothing more than a mediocre experience from this mediocre game. **Jeanne**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	4	5

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World Series Baseball 2K2

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Visual Concepts
Featured In: *EGM* # 146
Players: 1-2
Supports: Jump Pack, SegaNet
Best Feature: Franchise mode
Worst Feature: Online batting
Web Site: www.sega.com

Dreamcast owners were left dumfounded last year upon the release of WSB 2K1. Late, incomplete and poorly received, 2K1 was a fiasco for the Sega Sports brand.

Gamers breathed a collective sigh of relief when Visual Concepts signed on to take the development reigns for WSB 2K2. VC had already created two of the best console sports titles on the market (NFL and NBA 2K series), and bagging a topnotch baseball game seemed like a no-brainer.

But as the months went by, release dates for WSB 2K2 slipped and slipped again. It was, sadly, beginning to look like the 2K1 disaster all over again.

Thankfully, WSB 2K2 does not repeat history, but it does have some gameplay faults of its own. Any good baseball game is built around a solid pitching/hitting interface. While 2K2's setup is user-friendly and easy to get into, the pitches look slow and lack any real nastiness. The net result is that, offline, hitting the ball is far too easy, and pitching becomes dull and pointless.

Single-player games vs. the computer are fun enough, but two-player games (offline) turn into pure slugfests.

It would be nice if VC took a cue from EA and let the users customize their playing experiences. A couple of slider adjustments for pitch speed and break would have made a measurable difference.

Aside from a high ratio of hits, the game is a mixed bag once the ball is put in play. Manual fielding is here but there are some control issues on ground balls. Also, be prepared to watch plenty of line drives sail into your fielder's back, chest, etc. only to magically appear in the player's glove. Can you say "collision detection"? It's a fun term meaning stuff needs to be close to look like stuff really happened, and it's lacking in WSB 2K2.

WSB 2K2 takes some baby steps toward progress, but fails in a big-picture sense to be a defining title for the genre.

For better or worse, 2K2 offers a decent, slow-motion replay option. It's nice they included such a feature, but playbacks often reveal (in painful detail) the game's poor collision detection.

This was supposed to be my baby. An online baseball game...oh yeah, bring it on. Visual Concepts had already decimated most of my waking hours with online football and hoops, and I was looking forward to taking my beloved Tribe to the World Series of Virtualand, USA. **But while WSB 2K2 is tolerable offline, it lacks any zest and intensity once you jump on the Net.** Why? Well, the main reason is that VC dummied down the pitching/hitting interface by taking out the cursors. Now the guessing game is reduced, more or less, to timing instead of timing, velocity, placement, etc. The other factor was that, in our online tests, we saw a significant amount of lag. Hitting became a laughable trial of trying to guess "how early do I have to swing?" Single-player franchise and season modes offer a fair amount of replay value, as player contracts and 10-man farm rosters make for interesting management options. Once you're over the slow pitching, hitting is easy and the results are fun enough to watch, as there are seemingly infinite possibilities for where the ball will go. Bloop singles, ringing doubles, flares down the line...they're all in there. The game also features the most up-to-date rosters (an upside to the late release). WSB 2K2 is a contender among this year's baseball releases, but it was a bit of a down year on the console diamond. DC owners will have to wait 'til...uhh, never mind. There is no next year. **Dan L.**

I'm sorry to report WSB 2K2 is not the home run we hoped for. For starters, the animation glitches are so pervasive, you'll be scrambling for the replay button again and again. **"You're kidding me, he caught that?** He wasn't even facing the right direction!" You get the idea. The batting interface is too easy as well. You'll be hitting like crazy in no time flat. Online play doesn't offer any salvation. When we played (one week before release), the lag was so nasty that simply moving a fielder under a fly ball was a challenge. In closing, if you don't mind the rough edges, WSB 2K2 is an amusing offline game. Baseball nuts, however, will find plenty to gripe about. **Dean**

This overhauled sequel has little in common with last year's disappointment, but isn't the blockbuster I hoped for. **What ruined it is that the pitching and fielding are so much slower than real life.** Almost like slow-motion. My fastball was clocked at 106 mph, yet it seemed to move at half that speed. Imagine my off-speed change-up—it looked like it should have been timed with a sundial. The fielders even get into the sluggish act. I swear, Christopher Reeve could chase down a fly ball faster. If you don't care about realism, you might like this. Otherwise, it's time to move past the DC for your baseball fix—this one isn't ready for the big leagues. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	5	5

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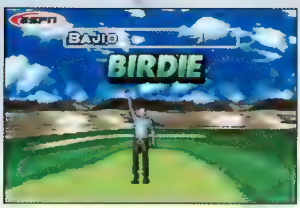

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Madden NFL 2002

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Sports
Players: 1-4
Supports: Rumble Pak
Web Site: www.ea.com

Best Feature: Looks nice
Worst Feature: Camera could follow the action better

The irony here is poetic, as EA's Madden was a late arrival to the N64 and now will stand as one of the last games released for the system. **Not a bad last game, either, but it has very little in terms of things you haven't seen before.** The visuals are a bit more polished, but it seems like there's a trade-off this year in framerate. It's not horrible or anything, but I'd give up a few polys for a smoother ride. The camera also seems to have lost some fluidity and is especially troublesome on inside runs. Other than those two knocks, this is the Madden you've come to know and love. New features include the Coaches Corner and some expanded franchise options. The coaching drills are very well-done, actually, and offer gamers the chance to work on their timing and knowledge of the game. John will walk you through every detail of a play, letting you know when to speed burst, when to throw, and so on. It's too bad there's no way to work on defense other than getting pummeled by the CPU game after game. I guess that's what a learning curve is all about. **Dan L.**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	6	7

Dance Dance Revolution Disney Mix

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami CET
Featured In: *EGM* #139
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dance Mat
Web Site: www.konami.com

Best Feature: "B4U"
Worst Feature: The Disney tunes get annoying quick

A quick primer: In DDR, you step (Simon Sez-style) with either your feet on a Dance Mat or fingers on the control pad, to the on-screen arrows and beat of the music. OK, now then, Disney Mix is just what it sounds like: DDR on the old-school Disney tip. Half of the 20 songs are techno renditions of familiar tunes from the House of Mouse, and the rest are new tunes or tame selections from the latest Japanese DDR. On Normal or Trick difficulty, **it doesn't take long to become bored of the techno Disney tunes.** With one or two exceptions, the steps lack the feverish energy of the other arcade Mixes. Maniac mode adds some much-needed "oomph," but the song list isn't big or good enough to give it staying power. After exhausting the regular game, all that's left is the unbalanced and short-lived Dance Magic versus mode to toy around with. If you're a huge Disney fan or under 10 you'll dig it, and the DDR elite may want to pick it up to support the series in the U.S. I love DDR, and this one's OK, but it's still the most forgettable game of Konami's dance-game catalog. **Chris**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	3	3	4

NFL GameDay 2002

Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: Red Zone Interactive
Try Instead: Madden NFL 2002
Players: 1-8
Supports: Dual Shock, Multi-tap
Best Feature: Fast-paced
Worst Feature: Sloppy gameplay
Web Site: www.989sports.com

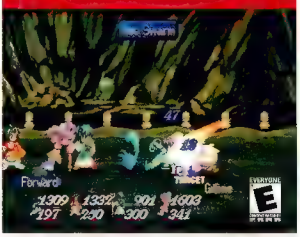
Ever see a bruising running back like Eddie George get knocked three feet backward by a stray forearm? How about a fat 300-pound lineman beat the Olympic record for the Long Jump? Probably not, but those are everyday occurrences on GameDay's wacky gridiron. **Something is wrong with a football title when you spend more time laughing at the instant replays than actually playing the game.** Hell, this is video gaming's version of a sports bloopers reel. The smile will be wiped off your face, however, when you're on the receiving end of the shenanigans. Nothing is more frustrating than an invisible wall knocking down a pass or a wide receiver hauling in a ball that was nowhere near him. Why should you bother using your playbook to execute a strategy if it's just as effective to throw the ball up for grabs and hope for the best? Running the ball isn't much better. Even if a rushing play has been stopped in its tracks, you can always use the player's super-human springboard legs to bail out the play by diving forward for three to four yards. Where's the skill in that? A few of these things have always been a part of the GameDay series and are also the reasons that some people swear by it. Years ago I could appreciate this style of play, but now it feels so sloppy that I can't possibly recommend it. As a devout football fan, I must say that GameDay is dead on the PlayStation. Madden is now the only game in town. **Kraig**

Compared to the last few editions, GameDay 2002 is an improvement. That's not exactly a ringing endorsement, but for the legions of fans that religiously buy the series regardless of what we say, it's swell news. Here are a few things you WON'T find in GD 2002: A) Receivers who suddenly run out of bounds for no reason. B) Blockers who magically levitate across the field. C) Players who celebrate after making a stupid play (OK, it still happens a little). And finally, D) the ability to pancake receivers without incurring a penalty. Seriously, it's great they tightened the AI and fixed some of the flaws, but **it's still mostly the same 'ol song and dance.** **Dean**

I'm sorry, but 989 has worn out its welcome with this series. I understand that PS1 owners need a viable football game, but this is rehash of the worst kind. GameDay 2002 could be GameDay '99, could be GameDay 2001, etc., save for a few fancy telestrator tweaks. **The same shoddy control and gameplay glitches remain.** Look, the truth is you should be playing PS2 or DC football by now. The end of a system's life cycle is not a pretty thing as far as sports games go. Innovation and progress hit the wall harder than Ray Lewis hits opposing running backs. If you must play last-gen football, stick to last year's version or, better yet, play Madden. **Dan L.**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	5	2	4

Tales of Destiny 2



Publisher: Namco
Developer: Namco
Also try: Xenogears
Players: 1
Encourages: Good manners
Best Feature: Great battle system
Worst Feature: Voice acting from hell
Web Site: www.namco.com

Unheralded in the U.S. but crazy huge in Japan, the Tales of Destiny series may yet get its domestic due with the release of TOD2, a modest yet utterly engaging RPG. Whereas many RPGs suffer from poor pacing (among other things), TOD2's simple but efficient premise (which centers on Reid Hershel's quest to help stranded alien Meredy save both of their worlds from disaster) is enough to keep players moving from random battle to pivotal storyline event. The secret behind TOD's success is the involving battle engine. Instead of another turn-based snoozer, TOD's system is a real-time, side-scrolling slasher that's almost Strider-like in its execution. Your AI allies (up to three) assist you by offering lateral support in the way of attacks, magic and healing. It all works rather efficiently, and the control is super-responsive. The graphics, being 2D sprite-based, all have a Final Fantasy Tactics-level of clarity and detail, while the backgrounds are reminiscent of Saga Frontier. Still, there are some nods to new-school technology as the world map and some of the mini-games take place in 3D or pseudo-3D, yet never look jarring or out of place. Occasionally you will find yourself at a loss trying to figure out where to go, but on the whole it's not much of an issue. And while the voice acting seems like it was recorded at a high-school play, **considering the few RPG options this fall, TOD2 is one of the better games in town.** **Milkman**

The original Tales of Destiny was no great piece of work, despite its classic RPG style and unique battle system. I'm happy to say that **Namco's fixed a lot of what made Tales 1 annoying** while preserving its cooler aspects for their three-disc sequel. Yes, the story still has that haphazard feel, with monumental events and conversations taking place inside of a few seconds. But the dialogue and voice acting are vastly improved, and the original's choppy combat has been smoothed flat. Those of the impatient persuasion will enjoy short load times and fiery 2D battles that make TOD2 part action game. It's a refreshing break from turn-based tedium. **Jonathan**

If an RPG doesn't have Final Fantasy in the title, people tend to overlook it. It's too bad; some of the most solid games in the genre are the lesser-known titles. TOD2 almost falls squarely into that bracket, if only the plot didn't take so long to really start developing. Even then, you'd think the unique battle system would make up for it. Alas, it suffers from the same problem—**it doesn't really get very good until later in the game** when you've learned some of the cooler techniques. Other than that fatal flaw, TOD2 is a respectable, if uninspired, game. If you're looking for something to tide you over 'til FFX, this might suffice. Just don't expect greatness. **Greg**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	5	4

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Digimon Digital Card Battle

Publisher: Bandai
Developer: Bandai
Players: 1
Also Try: Monster Rancher Battle Card
Web Site: www.bandaigames.com

Best Feature: It's Digimon!
Worst Feature: It's Digimon!

Check out Bigmoneymon's determination as he continues to suck Gamermon's piggy bank dry with another Big Name Brand Blast! Will Gamermon retaliate or will Digifanémon turn the tide and side with Bigmoneymon yet again? Perhaps if Gamermon gets fed up with trying to decipher DDCB's extra-convoluted interface, punctuated only by bargain-basement sounds and generic animations, then maybe a twinkle of hope still shines in some oversized eye out there. Too much melodrama over a couple of cosmetic issues? Fine. Say *howdy* to Mr. Compu(chea)ter and *sayonara* to fun. See, Mr. Compu(chea)ter strongly advocates winning through trial-by-fire experiences, not strategy. But how can battling never-before-seen cards-that-take-action-so-fast-it's-almost-impossible-to-anticipate be fun? Who knows. The cold, hard truth is that unless digi-fans like *EGM* editor James Mielke existed, **most would not care two digi-bits about DDCB after playing two digi-seconds**. So, choose wisely fans and non-alike, and don't just settle. Quality game time depends on it. **Jeanne**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
3	3	3	2

Madden NFL 2002

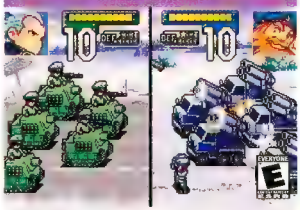
Publisher: EA
Developer: EA Tiburon
Also On: PS2, N64
Players: 1-8
Supports: Dual Shock, Multi-tap
Web Site: www.ea.com

Best Feature: Classic Madden Mode
Worst Feature: Madden and Summerall commentary

When I was playing this, passersby rubbed their eyes and disgustingly spouted, "What in the hell is this?" After only a year, we've been spoiled by next-generation eye candy, and PS1 Madden is showing its age worse than Ozzy Osborne. But you know what? People still pay good money to see Black Sabbath in concert. I'm not saying that you should buy this instead of the PS2 version. I am saying that if you can't upgrade to a flashier system, don't worry—this GameDay beater is so challenging and fun that **you shouldn't feel shame for sticking to PS1 Madden for another year.** I know I'll be playing it on my portable PS one. Just beating the mini-games and gathering Madden Cards will probably keep you busy until you can grab a PS2. Some of the extras even have exclusive depth, such as a cool two-player Two-Minute Drill mode, a Mulligan option (that lets you redo a play) and a retrogamer's dream: Madden '93 with updated teams and rosters. Isn't it ironic that the most notable new mode in this swan song is a nostalgic game that shows you how far the series has come? **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	5	7	10

Advance Wars



Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Intelligent Systems
Featured In: *EGM* #145
Players: 1-4
Supports: Link Cable
Also Try: Nectaris: Military Madness (PS)
Best Feature: It's easy to get into
Worst Feature: Twiddling your thumbs during your off-turn in multiplayer games
Web Site: www.nintendo.com

Jeanne, Jonathan, Mark and I are sitting in a room, taking turns, passing a GBA around. We're playing a two-on-two battle—Jon's my partner—and the war lasts about two hours. We won, of course. (How can we not, with *me* on our side?) But let me tell you, **I never had so much fun NOT playing a game**. You see, whether you share one GBA or link several up, you don't get to do anything when it's not your turn. Even though this was a bit of a downer, I didn't really care. The multiplayer game is so addicting, I just sat around patiently, eagerly awaiting my turn (though Mark and Jeanne's slow-pokiness did cause my blood pressure to rise a little). Why is the game so good, multi- or single-player? While it has some strategic elements (terrain factors, line-of-sight, etc.) and a healthy variety of units (enough infantry, boats, aircraft, tanks and more to make the U.S. military pee its pants), the game never loses sight of its mission: to provide an accessible and fun game that hardcore and not-so-hardcore strategy gamers can enjoy. The gameplay depth is just right. I play a lot of strategy games and didn't find AW too simple. At the same time, a rookie to the genre won't find the cart too intimidating, especially since it features a great mission-based tutorial system that's as fun to play through as the main game itself. AW has plenty of replay value too, with its large arsenal of maps and a cool map editor to mess around with. **Shoe**

Advance Wars hearkens back to the days when wars raged on pen-and-paper Ping-Pong table battlefields. It's turn-based strategy with all the land, sea and air war fixins, but stripped down for easy-to-learn yet hard-to-master play—**a formula that works well on GBA and triggers one's inner addict**. Disappointingly, though, AW'll test one's patience to the 'p' during four-play due to the inability to strategize on an off-turn (get used to staring at a black screen and telling others to "hurry up!"). Still, this turn-based-combat-meets-handheld combo'll hook any war or strategy gamehead; just don't get caught making those blam-blam noises out loud. **Jeanne**

Based on looks, you might expect AW to be for the Pokémon set, and it is: Cartoony graphics and simple controls are both very friendly and inviting (including fantastic tutorial missions). But the beauty is this game can get as complex as you want: With the web of strengths and weaknesses between land, sea and air troops, combined with movement, terrain, ammo and especially devious visibility considerations, **eventually each turn becomes like a sweaty chess match**. Multiplayer is a blast too (including the awesome ability to trade custom maps), but I wish AW updated you on what happened between your turns. An excellent, well-balanced strategy game. **Mark**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	4	4	8

Mario Kart: Super Circuit

EGM SILVER

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Featured In: *EGM* #144
Players: 1-4
Supports: Link Cable
Best Feature: Multiplayer modes
Worst Feature: Same ol' formula
Also Try: Konami Krazy Racers, or any of the other 273 kart racers out there
Web Site: www.nintendo.com

Way before kart-racing was cool, Mario Kart for the Super NES did the genre first and did it right. So it's no surprise this GBA update is solid fun—it's mostly a palm-size do-over of the original. I say mostly because, although the control and track design are faithful to the Super NES trailblazer, most of the tweaks here are pulled from Mario Kart 64. You collect coins to boost top speed (as in the original Mario Kart), but at the same time you can unleash multiple shell attacks, as well as turn into a vengeance-seeking bomb in Battle mode (tweaks lifted from Mario Kart 64). Long story short: **Super Circuit combines the best of the first two games.** The 20 all-new tracks pack clever shortcuts that you can often only access with the help of a power-up. And the game's visuals are crisp, smooth, better than the Super NES original, and—most important of all—bright enough to see clearly. But the multiplayer modes are the star of this road show. Yep, you can get by with one cartridge, but then all four linked players can only use Yoshi and choose from just a few courses ripped from the original game. Every participant will need a cartridge to access all the courses, characters and the battle mode in multiplayer. But is Super Circuit a must-buy if you already bought Konami's kart klone Krazy Racers? Nah. Even though Mario Kart's a wee better, the two games are so similar that owning both would be go-kart overkill. **Crispin**

Konami Krazy Racers beat Mario Kart to retail on the GBA, and while the latter has a strong tradition on consoles, it's not necessarily a better game. Being comparable isn't half bad, though, and Mario Kart is just as solid as KR. The multiplayer battle and versus games are what make it all worthwhile, naturally. But tight controls and gameplay inspired by the seminal N64 version will appeal to you, even in single-player mode. Don't expect the graphics to be much better than the SNES game, but MK looks pretty nice overall, and I can see addiction developing fast with this game. It's **a solid buy if you don't look for more depth than MK has offered before.** **Jonathan**

I've always enjoyed the Mario Kart games, and Super Circuit is another great one. The problem is it **isn't much more than the old game with a fresh coat of paint.** It's a testament to the quality of the gameplay that it holds its own against today's me-too kart games. It goes without saying that the multiplayer modes rock, and the track design is still excellent—though it doesn't offer anything new. I expected this to blow Konami's Krazy Racers out of the water, but it doesn't. The license tests and item power-ups in KR added a lot to what would've just been a good game, while Super Circuit is the illegitimate child of the previous Mario Karts. Great, but not "new." **Chris**

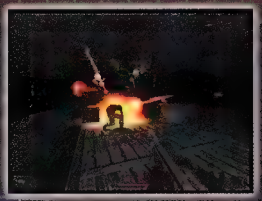
VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	6	8	9

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

GOLD EDITION

PlayStation.2

NEW DEATHMATCH MAPS



MATURE M

BLOOD AND GORE
VIOLENCE

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ACTIVISION

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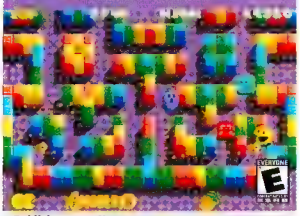
Pac-Man Collection



Publisher:	Namco
Developer:	Mass Media
Featured In:	*EGM* #144
Players:	1
Also Try:	Namco Museum
Best Feature:	Pac-Man Arrangement
Worst Feature:	Pac-Attack
Game List:	Pac-Man, Pac-Mania, Pac-Man Arrangement, Pac-Attack
Web Site:	www.namco.com

I grew up playing Pac-Man in the arcades of the '80s. (Maybe you know them—they were dark, dingy and reeked of sweaty socks stuffed with dollar bills and tokens...I'm convinced pockets weren't invented until the early '90s.) It's good to have this collection of classics on one cart, but a better package would've included Ms. and Super Pac in place of Pac-Attack and Pac-Mania. I don't consider Attack (a bare-bones and shoddy hybrid of Tetris and Pac-Man) to be a real Pac, and Mania suffers from a limited view and odd perspective **The jewel of this package is Pac-Man Arrangement** (check the screenshot above for a look at it). It certainly took Namco a long time to make a version of this outside the arcade. This is truly the next generation of their classic dot-gobbler, with a bunch of new gameplay twists. The additions (a new ghost that can merge with another to form a bigger/powered-up one, jump pads, more power-ups and a dash ability) bring a new dimension to the game. The graphics in Arrangement get it right where Mania went wrong—it's 3D but keeps the overhead perspective of the original. All of the games' graphics and sound replicate the arcade (and home, in the case of Attack) experience perfectly, minus the old-school smells. I'm still waiting for Namco to put out an all-encompassing Pac collection for a home system, but it's worth a purchase just to be able to play the original and Arrangement on the go. **Chris**

Namco Museum is a great cartridge. Not only does it have Ms. Pac-Man (which, in my humble opinion, is better than Pac-Man in every way), but a bunch of other top games as well. All PMC has going for it is the original Pac-Man. As far as I'm concerned, the other three games in this collection should never have made the cut. Let's face it. Outside of the original and Ms. Sequel, Pac-Man games haven't been too great. All PMC does is drive that point home. Had Namco included Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man and maybe Baby Pac-Man (anything but that crappy Pac-Mania), I'd be happy. As it is, **Namco Museum's a much better way to get your Pac-Man fix.** **Greg**

Nothing reminds me of my youthful days in video gaming more than the sound of "wocka wocka wocka." If anyone shares this sentiment, then Pac-Man Collection is right up your alley. While the original Pac-Man is nice, retro fun, the alternate Pac-Man Arrangement is where it's at. Namco added enough new power-ups and enemies to make it an interesting spin on the classic formula. It's like ChuChu Rocket meets Pac-Man, and that's good enough for me. Pac-Attack is a weird Baku Baku/Tetris hybrid, and Pac-Mania is just plain slow. It's an uneven collection where high scores disappear when the power goes off, just like they did in the '80s **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	5	7	7

Spider-Man: Mysterio's Menace

Publisher:	Activision
Developer:	Vicarious Visions
Featured In:	*EGM* #144
Players:	1
Also Try:	Castlevania: Circle of the Moon
Best Feature:	Detailed graphics
Worst Feature:	Frustrating gameplay
Boss List:	Rhino, Hammerhead, Electro, Mysterio
Web Site:	www.activision.com

Without giving away the ending of Spider-Man GBA, I feel it's my duty to gamers and comic book fans to mention how ludicrous it is. I'll just say that the story begins with Mary Jane calling up Peter, asking him to pick up a fishbowl, of all things, on his way over. If you know anything about Mysterio's appearance, you can probably take a guess as to where the fishbowl comes from. Still, finding out whether or not the developers would actually try to pull that sight gag off became my motivation for finishing this mediocre 2D side-scroller. I have to commend the game for its graphical prowess; it's pretty nice for an action platformer. I was also pleased to see many of Spidey's nemeses making it into the game; that's what makes Spider-Man more endearing than, say, Commander Keen. The gameplay, however, **suffers from the same disease as the console versions: Repetitive Gameplay Syndrome™.** Despite the addition of a flashy jump-kick and uppercut to Spidey's arsenal, it's the same punch-and-kick action throughout the brief "adventure." Plus, enemies consistently wait by ledges, ready to knock you off into spikes or nasty green sludge as you try to claw your way through, which is colossally annoying. You'll find yourself just hitting them with an immobilizing web and running by, since fighting lands you in worse shape than you started. Hardly behavior one would expect from New York's greatest crime fighter. **Jonathan**

I haven't played an old-fashioned side-scrolling beat-em'-up-like this since the days when I skipped school to play Super Nintendo. Nowadays, most of these slugfests bore me after a few levels, but not this one. I was surprised that **I had as much fun webslinging across town and on bathroom ceilings (perching above a stall amused me) as I did wailing on the baddies.** Don't expect to be a masterslinger right off the bat, though. There's a lot of technique to scaling and swinging that keeps you on your toes. The early levels are a pain in the ass when you're learning, and later ones are loaded with cheap hits, but who said being a superhero was easy? **Kraig**

Mysterio's Menace has that old-school platformer feel—fun, but frustrating at the same time. While the first handful of levels are enjoyable (once you've got a handle on the attacks and control anyway), the last quarter of the game is full of pinpoint, pain-in-the-neck jumps. Also, enemies just off the screen can shoot or charge at you, sometimes resulting in unexpected death. Mysterio isn't that long a game either; it'll be a couple of hours before you're up against the final boss. Visually, **the game imitates a comic book feel nicely,** but the backgrounds are a bit dark. (It takes place at night so I guess it's excusable.) Short-lived, but a decent portable Spidey game. **Chris**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	4	4

EGM SILVER

ESPN Golf

Publisher:	Konami
Developer:	Konami CEN
Also Try:	Mario Golf (GBC)
Players:	1-4
Best Feature:	Sharp graphics throughout
Worst Feature:	Lacks PGA license
Supports:	Link Cable
Web Site:	www.konami.com

I love good golf games, and this is one of the better ones I've seen of late. **It's scarce that a handheld game can hold my attention for much more than five minutes,** but Konami's done a great job of replicating some of the old-school fun that made EA's PGA series so fun on the Genesis. There's a traditional three-click power meter which is smooth and easy to operate. Club selection, shot type and fade/draw are all right at your fingertips, making for easy course management. The courses are beautifully displayed, and there are even some nice 3D-rotation effects going on. Great music and rewarding visual perks such as flying divots make this a virtual smilefest. Modes of play are, pardon the pun, par for the course, as Stroke, Match and Tournament play are there for the taking. The only real thing lacking here is a PGA license, but it's not really necessary on the small screen. The ESPN license gives the game an official feel just fine and offers a nice break for gamers who tire of "big-head" golf. If you're traveling anytime soon, pick this up. **Dan L.**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	8	8	8

Lady Sia

Publisher:	TDK Mediactive
Developer:	RFX Interactive
Featured In:	*EGM* #144
Players:	1
Best Feature:	Crisp graphics
Worst Feature:	Poor collision detection
Supports:	None
Web Site:	www.ladysia.com

The GBA is barely a few months old, and we have already seen enough action platformers to set some benchmarks. Klonoa set a pretty high overall standard, and while the graphics in Lady Sia are comparable, **the gameplay feels very unfinished**. It's an easy, easy game, and bosses are a snap once you figure out the single obscure trick to besting each one. The real kicker is that the few difficult points are due to gameplay flaws, not intelligent design. Wanky collision detection is to blame for most of the issues, which entail dealing or receiving damage. You flash lightly for a moment when hit, but there's no recoil, no animation, no sound effect...nothing to make it clear that you're getting hurt. That may not sound bad in theory, but it's frustrating when you can't figure out which understated hazard is sapping your life. I don't really understand the thinking behind the elaborate special abilities, either; they're cool-looking but far more trouble than they're worth. Despite good intentions, Lady Sia falls short of every gameplay goal it sets out to achieve. **Jonathan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	4	5	4

PlayStation 2

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ESRB EVERYONE E Mild Violence

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Pokémon Crystal

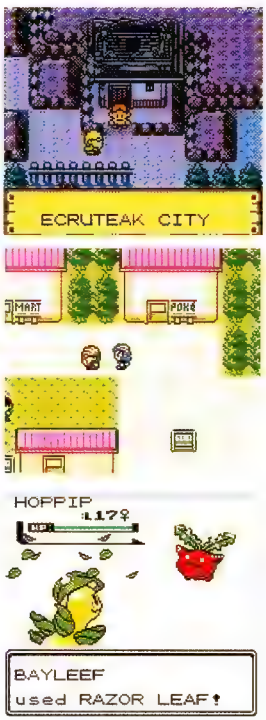
The ultimate Pokémon trainer challenge (new to Crystal) can be found inside the Battle Tower just outside Olivine City. It's not a piece of cake, though. The Pokémon you'll see are super-powered, so be ready!

Publisher:	Nintendo
Developer:	Game Freak
Featured In:	*EGM* #140
Players:	1-2
Supports:	Game Boy Printer, Link Cable, IR Link
Best Feature:	New Battle Tower
Worst Feature:	Same game as before
Web Site:	www.pokemon.com

Another year, another version of Pokémon. You'd think Nintendo was copying EA Sports' business model and just adding minimal new improvements; updated Pokémon animation, a few new areas, a girl character and the ominously named "Battle Tower" are the major additions. Crystal, by the way, is the first Pokémon that's not compatible with pre-GBC Game Boys, because of the graphical tweaks.

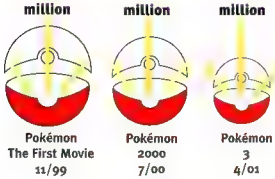
The story is the same as Gold/Silver: You play an aspiring Pokémon champion-in-training (boy or girl) in the mystical world of Johto. As you help Professor Elm with his Pokéresearch, you meet other trainers, wild monsters and members of the evil Team Rocket. It's a wonder the inhabitants of Johto don't fear for their lives constantly.

With Crystal, Pokéfreaks just have one question to ask themselves: Will you catch 'em all *again*?



Poké-Box Office

The games may have stayed popular, but the movies have taken a downward spiral.



Source: Internet Movie Database, www.imdb.com

Did you see the third Pokémon movie in the theater? Of course not—no one did. It didn't rake in anywhere near the box-office dough of the other two, signalling the end of the Pokémon craze. If you missed it when Pikachu and his friends were all the rage with the Zany Brainy crowd, you can now play without fear of ridicule. Overall, this is **a better, more polished game than Gold and Silver** (G/S), just like Pokémon Yellow was to Blue/Red. That doesn't mean it's a must-buy if you already played through G/S. The additions (new monster animations, female main character, the battle tower, the roof on the Goldenrod Dept. Store and others) don't alter the game-playing experience at all. Apart from the new stuff, the best thing about this Pokésequel (same with G/S) is that if you let it, it becomes a part of your life. When you're not playing, the game's internal clock ticks away. If you're not careful, you'll miss a sale at the Goldenrod Dept. Store, or (GASP!) the appearance of rare Pokémon on Route 36. It's as addictive and fun as you will allow it to be. This is more of an RPG than Red/Blue/Yellow; you battle against more human trainers than random Pokémon to gain experience. If Crystal's going to be your first Pokémon experience, add two points to my score. This is a game that shouldn't be missed. Otherwise, Pokémon fans like me would agree that these changes should've been in G/S to start with.

Chris

Aside from Pokémaniacs who are probably playing Crystal right now, fresh neophytes and fans who've long surrendered their stuffed Pikachus are the real targets for this shiny strip in the Poké-rainbow. Although Crystal may irk Gold/Silver veterans, its icing-on-the-cake visuals, intro battle animations, upgraded cell-phone plan, stranger-than-ever Pokémon, and *finally* an option to play a girl, will keep battles long and strong for gamers of all shapes and sizes. The breakdown? Poké-fanatics: collector's item. Poké-fans: straightaway to this series' best. Poké-babies: get on it already! **All around, Crystal's got goods for everyone.**

Jeanne

I admit it—I once defended Pokémon to those who dismissed it as a kid's game. Even now, I consider it one of the best handheld games ever...or at least it *was* the first five times I played it. Gold and Silver introduced the real-time element and new monsters, but Crystal is just a rehash (like Yellow was), and I'm just plain sick of it. I'm sick of the battles, I'm sick of the dungeons, I'm sick of the Pokéballs—and I can't be the only one. Crystal may top Gold and Silver (little animations, battle tower, etc.) but it's not enough if you've already played those games (unless you're obsessed or 10 years old). Like a level 80 Metapod, **this series is long overdue for an evolution.**

Mark

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	2	6

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Tricks of the Trade

By Trickman Terry
tricks@ziffdavis.com

TRICK OF THE MONTH

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

GAME BOY ADVANCE

FLY MODE

1 On the main menu, hold the R-Shift button and press Left, A, START, A, Right, Up, START. You will hear a sound and the wheel will spin around when you enter this code correctly.

2 While playing the game, press B to jump and then press and hold B to begin floating above the ground. You can move anywhere you want with the D-pad and by holding the R-Shift button, you can rack up some massive points. Just make sure you land on your board!

Michael LeGere
Salt Lake City, UT

PS2 PLAYSTATION 2

ATV Offroad Fury

ALL TRACKS AND ATVS

Every Track Open

From the main menu, choose the Pro-Career Mode option. Select an empty slot and then put in your name as CHACHING and the game will take you back to the main menu screen. This will open up all tracks in the game.

1 **All ATVs Available**

From the main menu, choose the Pro-Career Mode option. Select an empty slot and then put in your name as WHATEXIT and the game will take you back to the main menu screen. All of the ATVs in the game will now be available to ride.

Bloody Roar 3

UNLOCKABLE TRICKS

Sudden Death Survival

Unlock this mode by winning nine fights in Survival mode. You can defeat your opponent or your opponent can defeat you with one hit in Survival mode.

2 **No Guard Battle**

Unlock this mode by earning first place in arcade mode. Players will not be able to defend against each other's attacks. This works in Survival and VS. modes.

3 **Hidden Characters**

In Arcade mode, you can unlock these characters by following the procedures listed below.

Kohryu: Beat the 4th stage without losing a round and Kohryu will appear as your opponent on the 5th stage.

Uranus: Beat the last stage of the game without continuing. You will then fight Uranus on a special stage. You must defeat him to be able to play as him.

Low Speed Battle

Unlock this mode by fighting once with each character and getting a place in the rankings. Movements and attacks are at half the normal speed and attack power is doubled.

CART Fury: Championship Racing

ALL CARS, TRACKS, ETC.

From the main menu, access the Options. Go to the Cheats screen and enter the following button combinations for the following results.

Death Wall

X, Square, R2, Triangle, R1, R2. Walls will now destroy all cars.

Death Cars

L2, Square, L1, R2, R2, X. Any hits from opponent cars will destroy you.

Player Death Car

L1, Square, R1, R2, L2, L1. When opponents hit your car, they will be destroyed.

Every Alternate Car Unlocked

Triangle, X, Triangle, Square, L2, Triangle. You will hear a sound, but no visual confirmation will appear on the Cheats screen. On the Select Driver screen, press L1 to get access to the alternate cars. You will see that all of these cars will be unlocked and available for use.

Every Track Opened

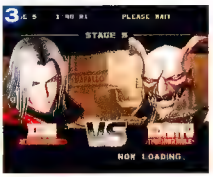
R1, Triangle, X, X, R2, L1. You will hear a sound, but no visual confirmation will appear on the Cheats screen. When you go to the track selection screen, you will be able to access the previously locked tracks such as New York and the Moon.

NBA Street

STREET CHEATS

After choosing your players, the Enter Cheats screen will appear. Change the four basketballs into other symbols by pressing the buttons the number of times shown, and then press Down on the D-pad. For example, 4,1,3,2, Down would be Square four times, Triangle one time, Circle three times, X two times and then Down on the D-pad.

4 **Summertime Joe "The Show"**
1,0,0,1, Down.
Athletic Joe "The Show"
1,2,0,1, Down.
Springtime Joe "The Show"
1,1,0,1, Down.
Player Names
0,1,2,3, Down.
Less Gamebreakers
1,3,4,2, Down.
More Gamebreakers
1,4,3,2, Down.



No Gamebreakers
1,4,4,2, Down.
No Dunks
3,0,1,2, Down.
Mega Dunking
3,0,1,0, Down.

5 **Beach Ball**
0,1,1,2, Down.
Soccer Ball
0,2,1,0, Down.
Casual Uniforms
1,1,0,0, Down.
Authentic Uniforms
0,0,1,1, Down.
Unlimited Turbo
2,0,3,0, Down.
Harder Distance Shots
2,2,3,0, Down.
No Juice
1,4,4,3, Down.
No Auto Replays
1,2,1,1, Down.
Captain Quicks
3,0,2,1, Down.
NuFX Ball
0,1,3,0, Down.

6 **No Heads Up Display**
1,4,1,2, Down.
Volleyball
0,1,1,4, Down.
EA Big Ball
0,1,4,0, Down.
ABA Ball
0,1,1,0, Down.
Medicine Ball
0,1,1,3, Down.

7 **Explosive Rims**
1,2,4,0, Down.
WNBA Ball
0,1,2,0, Down.
No Cheats
1,1,1,1, Down.

Quake III: Revolution

8 **CHEAP TRICK**

In the middle of a one-player game, press and hold L1+R1+R2+SELECT. While holding these, press X, Circle, Square, Triangle, X, Circle, Square, Triangle. The level will end with you as the winner. Even if you are in last place in the rankings, you will still win, and advance to the next level.

Twisted Metal: Black

AWESOME TRICKS

Make sure you have the control settings on "Classic" before entering these tricks.

God Mode
In the middle of the game, press and hold the L1+L2+R1+R2 buttons. While holding these, quickly press Up, X, Left, Circle. Precise timing is needed to get the trick to work. Once you do this, the words "God Mode" will appear on the top of the screen. You will now be invincible and have infinite weapons and ammunition.

9 **Killer Weapons**
In the middle of the game, press and hold the L1+L2+R1+R2 buttons. While holding these, quickly press X, X, Up. Once you do this, the words "Killer Weapons" will appear on the top of the screen. Any weapon (including your machine guns) will be able to kill an opponent in one hit.

Mega Guns
In the middle of the game, press and hold the L1+L2+R1+R2 buttons. While holding these, quickly press X, X, Triangle. Once you do this, the words "Mega Guns" will appear on the top of the screen. This will increase the power of your machine guns.

10 **Weapons for Health**
In the middle of the game, press and hold the L1+L2+R1+R2 buttons. While holding these, quickly press Triangle, X, Square, Circle. Once you do this, the words "Weapons for Health" will appear on the top of the screen. This will exchange part of your health bar for an increase in your arsenal of weapons.

TOP 5 TRICKS

The top 5 games of the last month given the full-on *Trickman* treatment:

1. The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons

GAME BOY COLOR

Hidden GBA Area
Using a Game Boy Advance to play this game will gain you access to a new area. In Horon Village, go to the house of the "Know-it-all birds" and the door to the right will be open. Go inside the door and you will enter the 100 Rupee Advance Shop. Everything inside costs 100 rupees. The items include a Gasha Seed, Advance Ring and a Magical Ring.

Chicken Attack
The old chicken attack method works with this game. Start slashing a chicken with your sword. Continue doing this and you will get a barrage of chickens attacking you! Remove yourself from the area to stop them.

2. Mario Party 3

Super Hard Difficulty
Complete Story mode on Hard difficulty with any character. Once you do this, you will be able to choose the Super Hard difficulty setting in Party and Story modes.

3. Pokémon Gold/Silver

GAME BOY COLOR

Duplicate Pokémon and Items
WARNING: THIS TRICK AFFECTS YOUR SAVED GAMES. USE WITH CAUTION! First, you must decide on the Pokémon and item you want to clone. At any time during the game, press START and access the Pokémon option. Choose the Pokémon you want to clone and make it hold an item that you also want to clone (such as a Master Ball). Next, go into a town and find a Pokémon Center. Move in front of the PC and press START. Move down the menu and access the Save option. After saving your game, press the A button to turn on the PC. Access Bill's PC and deposit the Pokémon you want to clone into one of the boxes. Then choose "Change Box" and move to an empty box. Press A and choose "Switch." When it asks if you want to save the game, choose "Yes." Now, this part is very important and requires precise timing. The game will tell you that there is already a save file, and it will

TOP 5 TRICKS (CONTINUED)

ask you if it is OK to overwrite the file. Choose "Yes" and immediately turn off the Game Boy. Be sure to turn it off before any words other than "Saving" appear on the screen, or the trick will not work. Turn the Game Boy back on again. Check your party status and you should see the Pokémon you wanted to clone still in your party. Access Bill's PC and look at the box in which you deposited the Pokémon. The Pokémon and the item it was holding will be cloned inside the box, and still in your party! You can clone up to five Pokémon and items at one time by doing this trick.

4. Crazy Taxi (PS2)

Taxi Bike
On the driver select screen, quickly press L2+R1, L1+R1, L1+R1 and then choose your driver. You will hear a bike bell if you entered the code correctly. Now you will be picking up passengers on a bike instead of driving a taxi.

No Arrows
After choosing how many minutes you want to play, the "Now Loading" screen will appear. Press and hold R1+START until the driver selection screen appears. You will see "No Arrows" on the bottom-left side of the screen to confirm that the code worked.

No Destination Mark
After choosing how many minutes you want to play, the "Now Loading" screen will appear. Press and hold L1+START until the driver selection screen appears. You will see "No Destination Mark" on the bottom-left side of the screen to confirm that the code worked.

5. Spec Ops: Ranger Elite (PS)

Invulnerability
From the main menu screen, choose the One Player Game option. On the "Sign In" screen, enter your name as ROCKSTAR. In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Turn the Invulnerable option to "On" and resume the game. This will protect you from gunfire and explosions.

DREAMCAST

Sonic Adventure 2

CHAO'S PUMPKIN HEAD

From the Stage Select screen, choose Rouge or Knuckles and go to the Chao Garden. Start digging the ground until you find a pumpkin. If you give it to a newly hatched Chao, it will play with the pumpkin and then throw it. If you give it to a more advanced Chao, it will put the pumpkin on its head!

PLAYSTATION

MLB 2002

HOME RUN MURRAY

From the main menu, choose the General Manager option. On the next screen, choose Create Player. Type in Scott for your first name and Murray for your last name. You can change any other stats you want, but it's not necessary. Save your new player into the free-agent pool and trade him to the team of your choice. Begin a game with that team. When Scott Murray comes up to bat, he'll be able to hit a 606-ft. home run!

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Rayman Advance

99 LIVES, ALL LEVELS, ETC.

Pause the game during play and enter these button codes. You will hear a sound when they are entered correctly.

99 Lives
Left, Right, Down, Right, Left, R-Shift.

All Levels Open
Up, Left, Right, Down, Right, L-Shift.

Every Power Available
Down, Left, Right, Left, Up, L-Shift.

Refill Health
L-Shift, Down, Left, Up, Down, R-Shift.

Tom Proctor
Woodstock, IL

Namco Museum

NON-VIOLENT GALAGA

In Galaga, you can get the enemies to stop shooting. To do this, you must first let all of the waves of enemies get into formation on the first stage. Once you do this, you may begin shooting the enemies, but make sure you leave the blue and yellow Galagas on the far, lower-left corner of the screen alone. Finish off all of the enemies except for this one. Wait for this enemy to dive at you and shoot, avoiding its bullets all the while. Wait until it stops shooting at you (this will take a long time, so be patient), and let it pass a couple more times to make sure it has stopped. Now shoot it and end the stage. On the next stage, all of the enemies will come in formation as usual, but they will not fire at you! Now you can play the rest of the game without enemies shooting at you.

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Gamers must be 13 years of age or older to receive the demo disc.

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GRAN TURISMO™3
The Inside Track

Contribute to The Inside Track!
Send all your GT3 tips, tricks and strategies to EGM@ziffdavis.com,subject: GT3 Inside Track.

Master Drafter

So you've made it to Area C in Arcade mode, and you've come up against the Test Course. If you're using the standard issue Arcade cars, this race can be maddening. You can't simply outpower your competition for a win on this long, high-speed track. Instead, follow these simple instructions. First, choose the Castrol Supra. Now, off the start, work your way up to second and tuck right in behind the guy in first. Whatever you do, DON'T PASS HIM. Ride his bumper all the way around the track.

Now, as you come through the final turn on the final lap, drop back a bit, but stay in the lead car's wake (if you can hear the wind, you're too far back). Once you're back on the straight section of the course, jam the throttle all the way down and suck right up onto his rear bumper again. At the last second, pull to the left. If you do this correctly, you should pass the leader and get the win.

i.LINK Hubbub

We've had a few questions regarding the i.LINK mode in GT3. For those of you who've been getting nothing but odd looks when you ask for an i.LINK hub at your local tech store, we're here to tell you that what you're looking for is better known as a Firewire hub. Hit 'em with that info, and they'll know exactly what you need.

But wait, there's more. i.LINK hubs use a six-pin configuration, while the PS2 uses a four-pin setup. So in order to link six PS2s, you need six four-to six-pin cables like the one in the picture above. Now you're ready for some head-to-head action.

Lube It Up

What's the cheapest upgrade for any car? A quick oil change, of course. We've told you before that your car loses power as the oil in it gets old. But we recently discovered that changing the oil the moment you get a brand-new car immediately ups its horsepower by around 15. Weird, we know, but important nonetheless.

Elasticity

Making some extra cash just got a whole lot easier. All you need to do is enter the 150-mile Super Speedway endurance race with a 4WD car (we suggest the Suzuki Escudo). Once that's done, go to the options screen and set your throttle to "left" on the right analog stick (see screenshot). Finally, take a rubber band and wrap it around the two analog sticks of your Dual Shock 2 (pictured above).

If you did this correctly (and who couldn't), your car should turn toward the outside wall and ride it around the track for every lap. Now go clean your apartment, watch dirty videos, or whatever else you do to kill time. Check back in about an hour and you'll have won the race. Nothin' like easy money!

Professional Mode

Arcade mode not giving you a challenge? Wish you were racing the other drivers instead of the track? No problem. Start Arcade mode, and when you get to the difficulty screen, hold down L1 and R1. "Hard" should change to "Professional." Now you'll have to run 10 laps on whatever track you choose, with tire wear on and a much more aggressive set of computer opponents. Good luck.

Wheel Station 2

Not everyone's wife or girlfriend will let them drag the kitchen table into the living room whenever they want to use Logitech's GT Force Wheel (not that the *EGM* boys would know much about wives or girlfriends). And let's be honest, you can't hook that thing to the coffee table and have any sort of success in the game. That's where Kyle Goodknight comes in. He's manufacturing and selling the Wheel Station 2 (patent pending) stand you see here for $50 (plus S+H) through his site, www.CapitolDiecast.com.

The WS2 is just about perfect for sitting on your couch and playing GT3 the right way (as our lovely and talented previews editor demonstrates in this picture). This sturdy wooden stand has an angled dashboard where you attach the wheel itself, and a recessed, slide-proof tray for the pedals on the bottom. It's definitely a worthwhile purchase for any die-hard GT3 gamer.

Hints, codes, reviews, screen shots, release dates, demos, updated everyday.
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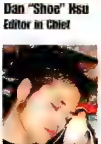
Jonathan Dudiak • jonathan_dudiak@ziffdavis.com
Chris Johnston • chris_johnston@ziffdavis.com

High-Class Problems

Dan "Shoe" Hsu
Editor in Chief

Shoe: I have a problem. This November, I'm going to have to buy MGS2, Devil May Cry, Grand Theft Auto 3, Tony Hawk 3, PS2 hard drive, PS2 network thingamabob, and GameCube and Xbox systems and games and peripherals. How am I supposed to afford all of that? Maybe GTA3 can teach me a thing or two about "supplemental income." What are you guys going to buy? And no, you can't have a raise.



Jonathan Dudiak
Associate Editor

Jonathan: Hey guys, I just found this new way to get all the new stuff that doesn't cost anything! It's called a credit card—apparently you just give the sales guy this little plastic card and you're done. No money changes hands at all! I'm definitely getting a GameCube and Xbox, but think I'll just pick up a couple titles for each: Smash Brothers and Pikmin on NGC, and Munch, possibly Halo for the X. Of course I'll already have Silent Hill 2 and MGS2, perhaps with a side of Ico. That goes without saying. Having found this limitless money supply, though, I'll probably just buy everything. Whee!

Chris: It's great that the game companies are filling one month full of such copious amounts of quality games and hardware, but next time they should spread it out. Do any of you guys have time to play the games you've bought NOW, during the "slow" time? Maybe Shoe will grant us all raises and proclaim that weekends are five days long (*wish* *wish*). I'm definitely picking up a GameCube with a buncha games. PS2-wise, I'll part with the cash for Ico, PaRappa 2 (if Sony'll release it in the U.S. soon enough), MGS2 and Devil May Cry. I still haven't seen anything that makes me want to buy an Xbox, so that'll at least save me some money. Although maybe I should look into this "credit card" thing.

"I just found this new way to get all the new stuff that doesn't cost anything!"

Chris Johnston
News Editor

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ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

NEXT MONTH

November 2001 (Issue #148)

On sale Oct. 2

It's Wrestling-Mania!

- WWF SmackDown!: Just Bring It (PlayStation 2)
- WWF Raw Is War (Xbox)
- Legends of Wrestling (PS2)

This fall is going to see several wrasslin' titles for the PlayStation 2 and Xbox. WWF SmackDown!: Just Bring It promises to bring the PlayStation series' awesome gameplay to the PS2. Raw Is War may just show it off with superior graphics. And Legends of Wrestling will bring back fond memories of Jimmy "Superfly," George "The Animal," Bret "The Hitman" and others from the menagerie of the insane old-timers who have "nicknames."

Be sure to watch for next month's feature story, which will bust open the heads of all three games to give you the full, juicy scoop, complete with color commentary.

Besides the wrestling stuff (left: Raw Is War for Xbox, bottom left: Legends of Wrestling for PS2), we'll also be checking out some other swank games, such as the looooooong-awaited Shenmue II for DC (above). Check back for our impressions of part two of the epic storyline, from Sega.

Reviewed Next Month:

- Silent Hill 2 (PS2)
- Ico (PS2)
- Bomberman Online (DC)
- Spider-Man Enter: Electro (PS)
- Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2 (PS2)
- Spy Hunter (PS2)

Previewed Next Month:

- Shenmue II (DC)
- NBA 2K2 (DC)
- NFL 2K2 (PS2)
- Run Like Hell (PS2)
- Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance (PS2)

*All editorial content is subject to change.

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

Oct. 2001

On sale Sept. 11

Demo Disc

Video Previews
- Kinetica
- Okage: Shadow King
- Drakan: The Ancient's Gate

Playables
- Cool Boarders 2001
- Ico
- Klonoa 2
- Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing
- Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2
- MX2002
- Spy Hunter

PS2 Demos

This month marks a hallowed moment for the *Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine*. Why? Packaged with this issue is the first PS2 demo disc, which should be enough to knock your socks off. Plus, a look at Konami's freaky thriller Silent Hill 2 (pictured below).

EXPERT GAMER

Oct. 2001

On sale Sept. 18

- Complete blowout on EA Sports Big's smash hit, NBA Street
- Time Crisis 2: tactics and hints

Ico

Anxious GameCube and Xbox watchers are going nuts with pre-release hysteria. "Which system is better?" "What are the games going to be like?" *XG* actually suggests Ico for PS2, and they've got a mind-blowing strategy. Plus, their strategy for Dragon Warrior III on GBC will have you whooping all the 8-bit baddies you can handle.

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

Oct. 2001

On sale Sept. 4

Reviews
- Arcanum
- Anachronox
- World War II Online
- Diablo II: Lord of Destruction
- Baldurs Gate II: Throne of Bhaal
- Mech Commander 2

Previews
- Etherlords
- Hidden and Dangerous 2

Star Wars: The Force Is Back!

LucasArts' awesome lineup of upcoming Star Wars games—many being developed by some of the best designers in the biz—has reignited our faith in the Force. The *CGW* staff puts its geek on big time in this issue, with in-depth previews of the complete lineup, including Star Wars Galaxies, Galactic Battlegrounds, Knights of the Old Republic and more!

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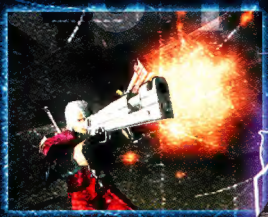

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